

THE
R I N G,
A
N O V E L:
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.
BY A YOUNG LADY.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

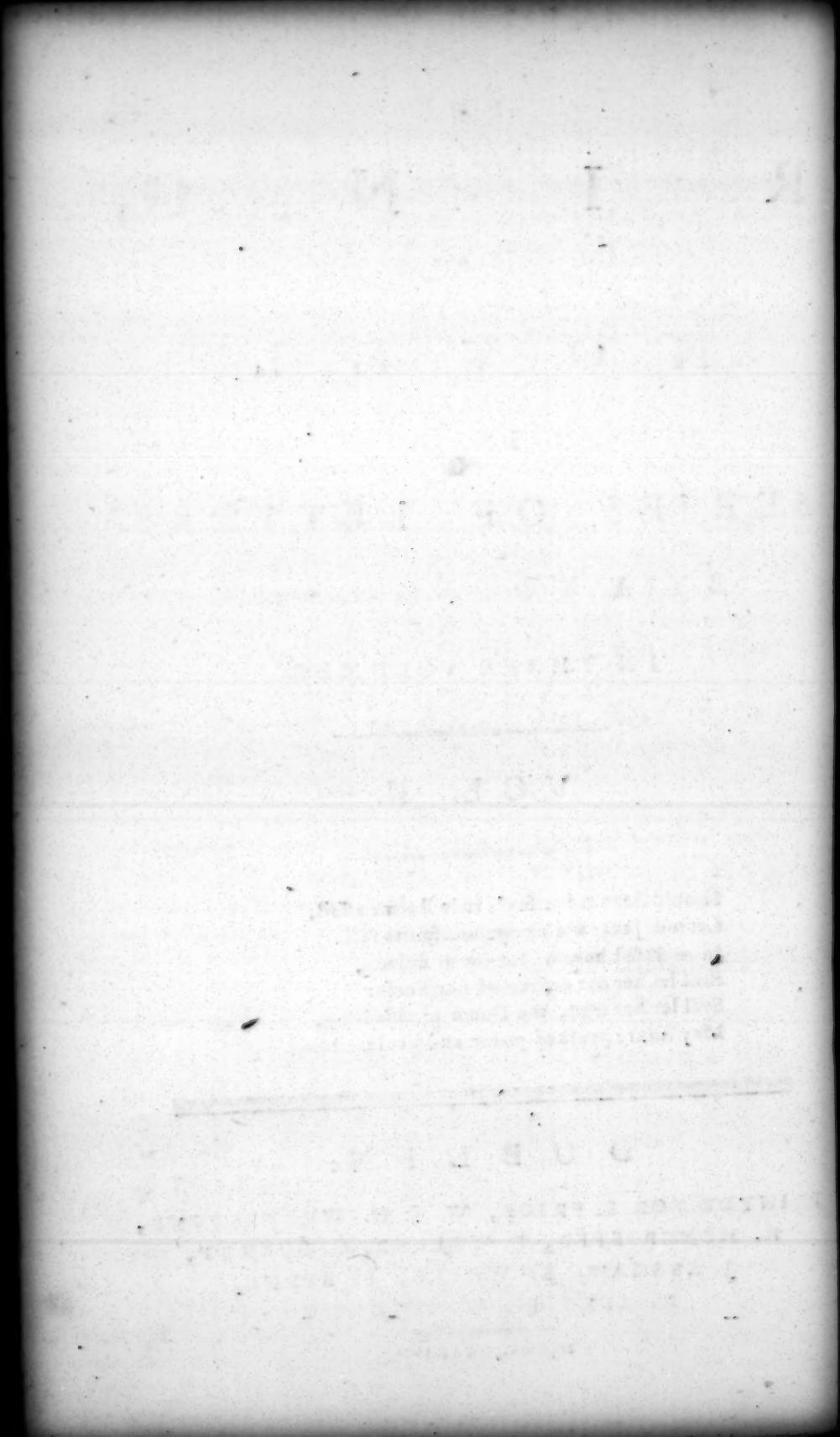
VOL. II.

Should stern Adversity's rude storms assail,
Let not JEWINA's hope nor spirits fail:
In each sad hour of sorrow or distress,
Still let her not despair of happiness:
Still let her trust, the Donor of this Ring,
May future years of peace and pleasure bring.

D U R L I N:

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M,DCC,LXXXIV.



THE
HISTORY
OF
Lady Jemima Guzman.

LETTER XLVI.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

London.

WHY, what the devil, George, are you about ?
Do you intend to bury yourself in the country
all the winter ? Your last desires to know how I go
on : well, I'll tell you.

In the first place, I'm in love.

" That's no news !—But with whom say you ? "

That's a question, George, I can scarcely resolve.
Her name is Meadows, and I'll challenge all England
to match her—in beauty as well as in every accom-
plishment. She sings like a Linley, plays divinely,
talks almost every language, (I'm told) and dances in-
comparably.

" But what fortune ? What family ? What con-
nections, Sir Cecil ? "

G 2

Ay,

Ay, George, that's the devil for neither I nor any one else know an iota of these particulars. She is at present an humble friend or companion of Lady Caroline Benson, and has had, it seems, many offers of marriage, all of which she has rejected; nay, even *I* (I almost blush to own it) *I* too have proffered my hand and been refused also.

Lady Caroline is remarkably attached to her, to the surprize of every one, as no other woman can expect to be noticed when the angelic Meadows is present. Dudley, Darcy, Molesworth, that coxcomb Greville, Meredith, and myself, with half a dozen more too tedious to enumerate, have all in vain proffered and proposed the most honourable terms to her. For my part, I will own to you, that I should have wished to have had her on *dishonourable* terms, as she has no fortune; but I am too great a coward to make any overtures of that kind; besides, there's a certain something in her whole behaviour which inspires one with awe. This is all I shall say about her at present, as there is another female to whom I must devote part of this letter, but who is a very different woman from the charming Miss Meadows.

Lady Clara Fitzgerald I believe you have seen, though not since she became Lady Clara Belville. I had seen her, but never enjoyed the honour of an acquaintance with her until she married the Colonel. She is very gay; too gay, indeed, I should have thought, for any man to venture on for a wife: neither would Colonel Belville have been the man, I verily believe, had she not made her love for him so public, that it was the common talk of every tea-table in town. 'Tis now scarcely three weeks since the happy knot was tied, and yet I will venture to affirm, that she has now no more love for her husband, than if she had never seen him, as she coquets with all our sex in general, but with myself in particular. Though I can't for the soul of me reject the attentions with which she honours me, yet I can't say I am desirous of planting a pair of horns on

on Belville's head, as I should not chuse to have the compliment retorted upon myself if ever I be fool enough to enter the matrimonial noose. But what can our sex do if the women will throw themselves into their arms? This, however, my friend, is the present state of my affairs; and in this state I shall leave them for the present, and put an end to this letter from

Your sincerely,
CECIL MOWBRAY.

LETTER XLVII.

Sir John Dudley to Sir Charles Wilmot.

I WAS extremely concerned to learn from yours which I received * yesterday, that you are obliged to leave England so suddenly. I likewise yesterday received a letter from my generous friend and patron Lord Molton, who writes me that he shall be in town the latter end of this week. I expect his arrival with the utmost impatience. And is there any wonder in it, my friend? I never had the happiness of knowing my real parents, though scarcely have I experienced their loss, through the paternal care and tenderness of this worthy, generous man.

In one part of his letter he says, "Have you not yet, my dear Jack, met with the woman you should chuse for a wife?" I could answer, "Yes, my Lord, I have;" but as often as I think of the lovely Jemima Meadows in that light, I feel an inward monitor, who seems to check the thought. She, too, appears to have no aversion to me, but, on the contrary, treats me with a sisterly familiarity. She has numerous admirers, yet rejects them all. At the same

* This Letter does not appear.

time I am inclined to believe, that if Colonel Belville had paid his addresses to her, he would not have been refused, as I have very cogent reasons for thinking that she does not dislike him. She practises every art and method in her power, indeed, to conceal her passion; but from the agitation into which she is always thrown by his appearance, I am convinced she esteems, nay, loves him. I am likewise convinced, from a nice observation and comparison of incidents and circumstances, that Belville is equally in love with her, tho' he has never given any public proofs of his partiality for her. He is an excellent young man, and, in my opinion, deserving of the amiable Jemima; at least I think he merits a better wife than I fear he will find in the woman to whom he has been recently united.

"Tis something singular methinks, that nobody knows the real character or history of this Miss Meadows. Her education and accomplishments would seem to bespeak her birth much superior to her present rank in society. In short, it is generally agreed, that it is impossible she can have been always bred in the style of life in which she appears at present; and in this opinion most sincerely acquiesces

Yours,

JOHN DUDLEY.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that Lady Caroline Benson is much altered for the better; and I believe, if it is decreed that the lovely Jemima shall not fall to my lot, that I shall again offer my hand to her Ladyship, as, vanity apart, she does not at present treat me as if she would reject me a third time.

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

My dear Julia.

I THINK I concluded my last letter* with informing you, that I was necessitated to break off abruptly, from being obliged to dress for the Opera in the evening. Would to heaven I had not gone; for by the following unfortunate accident I have lost the Ring my uncle gave me.

Lady Caroline and myself, with Colonel Molesworth and Mr. Darcy (Sir John Dudley was to have escorted us, but some unexpected business prevented him) went to the opera. We were seated in the pit, which was so crowded, that I found myself ready to faint from the intense heat and closeness of the place. In pulling off my glove to feel my for salts, it unluckily dropt, when a gentleman (at least he appeared to be so) picked it up and returned it to me. I drew it on again without missing my Ring; neither did I perceive my loss, till going into the coffee-room, and again having occasion to take off my glove, I found no Ring upon my finger. I immediately told the circumstance to Lady Caroline, who instantly communicating it to Mr. Darcy and the Colonel, they returned immediately to the pit: no Ring, however, was to be heard of. The servants of the Theatre, indeed, promised, if they should find any ring to send it to me; but I have hitherto heard no tidings of it.

I cannot conceive how I could be so careless! My loss has already occasioned me not a few enquiries from Lady Caroline; such as, "Who gave you this Ring?" and, "Who and what was the uncle

* See Letter XLV. in Vol. I. p. 140.

" who gave it you ?" with many other questions of a similar kind; all of which I have evaded as much as possible; though, if her Ladyship's curiosity should continue, I much fear I shall be obliged to tell her my history.

A servant just informs me that Lady Clara Belville is below; I must therefore defer the remainder of my letter till my return.

IN CONTINUATION.

WHEN I entered the parlour Lady Clara exclaimed, " How are you, my dear ? I am come to sit half an hour with you, for Belville begins to play the husband already."

" How is that, my Lady ?"

" Why, Lord ! he's jealous of Mowbray, my dear."

" Surely, I hope your Ladyship is not serious !—
" You only fancy so, Lady Clara."

" No, indeed, I don't ; for he told me this morning at breakfast, that he did not approve of Sir Cecil's frequent visits. And why, forsooth, doesn't he ? Because, I suppose, Sir Cecil is civil to his wife."

" Why, my dear Lady Clara, you know Sir Cecil does not enjoy the best of characters respecting our sex ; therefore I should think, that the less he was encouraged the better."

" Lord, child, you are so like the Colonel, 'tis pity but you had been wedded to each other !"

Good Heavens, my Julia, how I coloured at this speech ! and the more so, as I thought her Ladyship fixed her eyes upon me in a very significant manner. I endeavoured, however, to turn off her remark with a laugh by replying. " No, my Lady, I hate Belville, you know.—But to be serious, Madam : will you permit me to give you my advice ?"

" Certainly

" Certainly : that's what I came for."

" Well then, my dear Lady Clara, let me too inform you to dismiss Sir Cecil from your house."

" And so dismiss almost the only pretty fellow who frequents it !"

" Heavens ! my Lady, can you be serious ? Are you not married to the man you preferred to all others ? and would you ever have wished to put Sir Cecil Mowbray in the place of Colonel Belville ?"

" Why, no ; I certainly preferred Belville : but I don't think I was the woman of his choice."

" No ! Surely you wrong him. Has he given you any cause to suspect his affections ?"

" No otherwise, than by insisting I should dismiss Sir Cecil."

" Indeed now, my Lady, instead of considering that as a mark of his coldness and indifference, I think it is a strong proof of his affection.—I hope my dear Lady Clara will excuse my reminding her, that before she was married, the busy tongue of Scandal assumed very unwarrantable liberties : and surely she cannot suppose that it will be less impertinent in animadverting upon any imprudence or impropriety of behaviour or conduct she may unwarily fall into in her conjugal state. For my part, I do assure you, Ladyship, that, in my humble opinion, Sir Cecil Mowbray is a man whom no woman of honour (especially a married one) ought to be acquainted with."

" And this is really your opinion !—But pray, my dear, if you were in my situation, would you never wish for any other man than your husband to attend you to places of public diversion ?"

" If that husband, my Lady, was the man of my choice, I should never chuse to accept of any other civilities from the rest of his sex, than such as were sanctioned by the common rules of politeness and good-breeding."

" Well but, now, suppose this man, even though
 " he was the man of your choice, should chuse to
 " treat you with neglect and indifference, what would
 " you do then ?"

" Why, if that should prove my lot, I would by
 " the most gentle winning arts of which I was mistress,
 " endeavour to reclaim his affections; and if I found
 " him still continue insensible to my attentions, I
 " would endeavour to support my ill fate with patience
 " and resignation."

" But suppose the men, in such a case, should per-
 " ter you with attentions and affiduities, in hopes of
 " prevailing upon you to avenge your own wrongs by
 " sacrificing your husband's honour; how would you
 " manage then ?"

" Either dismiss them from my house, or seclude
 " myself from all mankind, sooner than endure their
 " impertinence, or revenge myself upon myself."

" O dear ! O dear ! I never heard the like !—But
 " now, my dear, will you tell me—Suppose you were
 " a man, and had a wife whose conduct you were dis-
 " satisfied or displeased with, what would you do
 " with her ?"

I could not forbear laughing at this ridiculous ques-
 tion, nor could I restrain it while I made her Lady-
 ship the following reply :

" I must confess, Lady Clara, your question is ra-
 " ther singular; but if I were united to a woman who
 " proved refractory, I would first try by gentle
 " means to reclaim her; and if I found those fail, I
 " would then confine her in some sequestered place or
 " antiquated castle, till she came to a proper sense of
 " her duty."

" Fye upon you ! sye upon you ! What a husband
 " you would make, indeed !—But it grows late, and
 " I must therefore begone; but I shall never forget
 " this conversation. Adieu !"

How unfortunate it is for me, my dear Julia, that I should happen to be such a favourite with Lady Clara, as by that means I am forced to hear so much of Belville!

You must know, my dear, I have formed the following scheme: I intend this summer to look out for a small spot of ground, with a little cot belonging to it; I should wish it to be in a neighbourhood not wholly void of society; and then, though my fortune is small, I should at least, I hope, regain that serenity and ease which my heart has so long been a stranger to. Working, reading, drawing, music, and sometimes writing (though that would be but seldom, as you know I should then have a few if any adventures to relate) would fill up my time. The only obstacle to my design is parting from Lady Caroline, whose esteem for me I now begin to think is real: but I am determined to put my scheme in execution, being quite tired of depending on other people's bounty.

I think, my Julia, this packet is long enough; however, I must inform you, that Sir John Dudley has visited here very little of late, being entirely taken up with attending Lord Molton, who is just arrived in England. His Lordship has not called upon us yet, though Lady Caroline wishes very much to see him: and methinks I do so too, though I know not why.

I have had no tidings of my *Ring*. I could beat myself for being so careless; but I will not tire you, and therefore shall subscribe myself, as usual,

Yours affectionately,

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER

LETTER XLIX.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

London.

HUM! “ If you have any regard for a Lady’s reputation, or the domestic happiness of Colonel Belville, you will desist in future from visiting his family.” So says the sage Captain Hillgrove. Why, I don’t know what to say to it!—As to the esteem I bear her Ladyship, it is nothing more than a *penebant* I have *pour badiner* with all the pretty women who chuse to throw themselves into my arms.

“ Why what the devil (exclaim you) is all this about?”

Have but a little patience, George! I have not yet finished my soliloquy.

Now, who, among all the pretty creatures, shall I turn my thoughts upon? Shall it be Miss Meadows?—Hum!—No; she has no fortune.—Hum!—“ To be, or not to be, a husband, is the question.”—

But it is two o’clock in the morning, and yet here am I writing to your worship. I have not set eyes on Lady Clara this day, and now I warrant she is fretting herself to death to guess the reason of my absence. Aye, my dear, (as some author says, but I forget who) “ the more you advance, the further we retire.”

I will now go to bed, as I must be up early to prepare for a trip I am going to take with Lord Newton to his villa at Hampton. When I return, which will not be before Thursday, I will (that is, if I continue in the same mind I am in now) go and throw myself at the feet of the adorable Jemima Meadows. If I am accepted, why, then, I shall be supremely blest: if not—But where the devil is my pen running! Surely a girl who has neither friends nor fortune, will never think of refusing a man of my rank and consequence in life!

life! No, no, George; there is no fear of that: girls now-a-days are too willing to become wives, seriously to reject such men as you and I, when we condescend to offer ourselves.

I am so sleepy that I can scarcely subscribe myself yours
CECIL MOWBRAY.

LETTER L.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

London.

HERE I am still, Burton; neither do I know how to leave my friend Harry.—Have I not in some measure been the cause of his unhappiness? But I will here give you a conversation which passed between Belville and his Lady a few mornings ago. It was introduced by her Ladyship asking the servant who attended at breakfast, if Sir Cecil Mowbray had called? The man answered in the negative, and soon after quitting the room, she thus began:

"I was so fatigued last night at Almack's, that I
"was positively almost dead when I came home."

BELVILLE. "I don't at all wonder at it, my
"dear, for it was extremely late; and I do assure you,
"that if you had not come when you did, I should
"certainly have ordered the chariot to Almack's, as I
"began to be alarmed lest some accident had
"happened."

LADY CLARA. "Good Heavens! surely you would
"not have attempted such a thing!"

BELVILLE. "Why not my dear?"

LADY CLARA. "Why, Lord, I should have been
"ashamed to shew my face at the Rooms ever after!
"A pretty thing, indeed, for my female acquaintance to talk about! 'Lord, what do you think?' says one.—'Lord, what do you think?' says another.—Lady Clara Belville staid rather late at Almack's

" mack's last night, and, would you believe it ? the
 " Colonel came to conduct her home. I suppose he
 " thought she was eloped with her partner."

Poor Harry pretended to laugh at this speech of her Ladyship's, though I too plainly saw it hurt him not a little.

HILLGROVE. " Did your Ladyship dance ?"

LADY CLARA. " Certainly."

BELVILLE. " Who was your partner ?"

LADY CLARA. " Sir Cecil Mowbray."

BELVILLE (*in an ironical tone*) " I am much obliged
 " to Sir Cecil for his constant attendance on your La-
 " dyship; however, Madam, I should be better
 " pleased, if you would give orders that he be no more
 " admitted into this house."

LADY CLARA. " Sir—Mr. Belville !—are you se-
 " rious ! What reason can I give Sir Cecil for a con-
 " duct so strange and rude ? I am sure I will never
 " give such orders."

BELVILLE. " Then, Madam, I will give them
 " myself."

Saying this, Harry quitted the room. Her Lady-
 ship for some moments kept her seat (I, for my part,
 was reading); then rising, exclaimed, " This is matri-
 " mony !" and ringing the bell, ordered the carriage.
 Whither she went I know not, as she did not return
 till just before dinner, and then appeared very thought-
 ful and reserved.

The next morning I arose early, and after dressing,
 went to Sir Cecil Mowbray's house. I was informed
 he was at breakfast; but sending up my name, I was
 immediately admitted; when the following dialogue
 ensued :

SIR CECIL. " Captain Hillgrove, I am happy to
 " see you. Have you breakfasted ?"

HILLGROVE. I have not, Sir Cecil."

SIR CECIL. " Pray be seated, Sir.—I hope I may
 " consider this as a friendly visit."

HILLGROVE.

HILLGROVE. " You may, Sir ; though, perhaps,
 " you may think the business which has brought me
 " hither to be rather an odd one. But will you, Sir,
 " do me the honour to answer a few questions I am
 " desirous of proposing to you ? "

SIR CECIL. " I must confess, Captain, you astonish
 " me : but whatever questions you are authorized to
 " propose, I will endeavour to answer."

HILLGROVE. " I have no authority for what I am
 " going to say, Sir Cecil : it is merely to serve a very
 " old and dear friend—I need not tell you, perhaps,
 " that I mean Colonel Belville."

SIR CECIL. Pray, proceed, Sir."

HILLGROVE. " Had you ever any *tendre* for Lady
 " Clara before she became Belville's wife ? "

" SIR CECIL. " None in the least, Sir ; for I had
 " scarcely ever seen her till we met at Belville-Hall.

HILLGROVE. " Do you now feel any particular
 " partiality for her Ladyship ? "

SIR CECIL. " No more than I do for the rest of her
 " sex."

HILLGROVE. " Your candour, Sir Cecil, em-
 " boldens me to go on.—Has her Ladyship ever given
 " you any reason to suppose that she prefers you to her
 " husband ? "

SIR CECIL. " Indeed, Captain, this is a question I
 " am intirely at a loss to answer. Lady Clara Bel-
 " ville is certainly a very fine woman ; but I do af-
 " fure you, that at present I have not the least inten-
 " tion of either injuring her or her husband's honour.
 " Pray, Sir, does the Colonel know of this visit ? "

HILLGROVE. " He does not, upon my honour."

SIR CECIL. " Has he any suspicion that I mean to
 " injure him ? "

HILLGROVE. " I can't absolutely say that he has ;
 " but Lady Clara is young, gay, and thoughtless :
 " you, Sir Cecil, are reckoned a dangerous man
 " among the sex ; and (*bere be bowed*) as you are
 " always

" always of her parties both at home and abroad,
 " the Colonel is rather uneasy for her reputati-
 " on.—And now, Sir Cecil, you have behaved so
 " much like a man of honour during the whole of our
 " conversation, that I am tempted to request, that if
 " you have any regard for Lady Clara's reputation, or
 " the domestic happiness of Colonel Belville, you will
 " desist in future from visiting his family." Here I
 stopped.

Sir CECIL. " This is a whimsical request, Captain ;
 " but if it will afford any satisfaction to the Colonel,
 " I will embrace your terms, and from this moment
 " will never, if possible, give him the least pain on my
 " account."

HILLGROVE. " Nobly said, Sir Cecil ! From this
 " time command me ; and from this time I shall be
 " proud to be considered as your friend."

Soon after this I took my leave, and have the pleasure to inform you, that Sir Cecil has most religiously observed his promise ; which induces me to believe that he is not altogether deserving of the character generally imputed to him.

Lady Clara is amazed at his absence ; and so indeed is Henry, whom I have not yet informed of my visit to the Baronet, but propose to mention it to him some time to-day.

This evening a ball is given in honour of Belville's nuptials. Good Heavens, Burton, only think ! Lady Clara has been married but one fortnight, and is already tired of her husband. How strange ! Lady Caroline Benson with Miss Meadows are to be of the party this evening. Mowbray was likewise invited ; but this morning, while we were at breakfast, the following card was received :

" Sir Cecil Mowbray's compliments to Colo-
 " nel and Lady Belville : is extremely concerned
 " to be prevented from fulfilling his promise by indis-
 " pensable business calling him into the country this
 " afternoon."

As soon as Henry had read the note, my Lady coloured, but said nothing; neither did he, though his countenance bespoke both surprise and pleasure. He is just come home; I shall therefore take this letter, and read that part of it in which I have introduced the conversation between Sir Cecil and myself.

Five o'Clock.

THE dinner-beil has just rung; I can therefore only add, that Belville is in raptures with Mowbray, and equally pleased with

Yours,
EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER LI.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

THE ball is over! It was conducted in a stile as splendid as the company was brilliant. Above one hundred persons of both sexes were assembled to grace it. All the ladies were handsome, and superbly as well as elegantly dressed. Miss Meadows was *simplex in munditiis*, and in ease, elegance, and beauty, outshone every female present*. She danced one minuet with Belville, and a second with Sir John Dudley, who was her partner for the evening. She dances incomparably indeed! She appeared very much fluttered on Belville's taking her out, but acquitted herself to the admiration of every one. How is it possible, Burton, this Lady can be what she appears? It cannot be: such ease of manners, such elegance in conversation, and such acquired accomplishments! how can she, I again repeat it, be what she appears? Besides,

*—*Micat inter omnes
Julium fidus, velut inter ignes
Luna minores.*

would

would the humble companion of a lady of quality reject the offers of marriage she daily receives, if she was not influenced by a conscious superiority? Sir John Dudley, Colonel Molesworth, and Mr. Darcy, who are deemed very good kind of young men, as times go at present, have all been repeatedly refused by her; but whither is my pen hurrying me?

Lady Clara danced with Lord Morton, and was tolerably gay, notwithstanding the loss of Sir Cecil; Belville danced with Lady Caroline Benson; and your humble servant with Lady Lucy Merrick. The company did not break up till four in the morning, and were not dispersed till near five.

I propose to leave town about Friday next, and once more join my friends at Burton-Hall.

I believe I have not yet informed you that Walsingham is married. Last Tuesday I had the honour of giving the bride away. Miss Dunbar was present on the occasion, but leaves the new-married pair in a few days. What you say respecting that young lady, is certainly true: I do esteem her above all the women I ever knew; but as I think esteem too cold a word for a man to use who proposes to become a husband, and as I don't find myself inclined to use any other at present, I shall stop my pen from proceeding farther on such a delicate subject. In short, Miss Meadows has in some measure put me out of conceit with the rest of her sex. I revere her, and I esteem Miss Dunbar.—

Adieu! Yours,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

Miss Thornton to Miss Meadows.

My dear Jemima,

HOW greatly was I distressed by the latter part of your last letter ! How can you entertain such a thought as that of burying yourself in the country ? You say Lady Caroline treats you with kindness : why then, my lovely friend, think of shutting yourself up from the world, and abjuring all the charms and pleasures of society ? So long as Belville remained single, I was cautious of obtruding my advice ; forgive me, however, if I now presume to offer it to my Jemima. Why not strive to forget the man who cannot now be yours ? Why not give your hand to one of those gentlemen who are daily suing for it ? You say, you esteem Sir John Dudley, but cannot think of him as a husband : believe me, my dear, esteem is sister to love. He is a worthy man ; and before you saw Colonel Belville, the picture you drew of Sir John Dudley was the most flattering to be conceived. Leave then the Colonel to his present wife, and unite yourself to some amiable man whom you think deserving of you, nor longer let a hopeless passion prey upon your spirits.

Though I have not hitherto spoken of your ring, you may be assured that it was not forgot by me. I am as much grieved for the loss of it as you can be, but hope by this time you have recovered it.

I have just received a letter from Mrs. Walsingham. I wish her happiness most sincerely.—But my father calls me ; I must therefore bid you adieu.

JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER

LETTER LIII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

GRACIOUS Heaven ! what a discovery have I made, my Julia ! Belville did once love me !— But to be explicit.

The evening before last being destined for the ball at Lady Clara's, I accompanied Lady Caroline to the Colonel's. Belville took me out to dance a minuet. How I performed I know not, as I trembled so exceedingly the whole time, that I could scarcely take a step. During the evening I danced with Sir John Dudley. At the end of the third dance I sat down ; when Captain Hillgrove immediately placed himself by my side, and paid me some compliments on my performance. Having occasion to use his handkerchief as he was conversing with me, a paper fell out of his pocket at the same time. I was just going to mention it to him, as he did not perceive it, when his partner called him to join the dance. I instantly took it up, with a view of returning it to him the next time I saw him ; but accidentally observing my own name, as I was replacing the folds of the letter, I found it impossible to restrain my curiosity, especially when, looking at the bottom, I saw the signature of Belville. I hastily put the precious prize into my pocket, as I saw Sir John Dudley advancing, and the moment I got home impatiently ran over the contents. I enclose you a copy *.

By this time, I suppose, my dear Julia has read Belville's epistle : may I ask her to favour me with her sentiments of its contents ? I am sure she will easily guess what my feelings were when I read that part where he says, " that on the first sight of me, he felt

* This Letter does not appear.

" sensations

" sensations in his breast he had never experienced before."—At the latter part he again says, but I will "try to surmount a passion which I find will only be productive of unhappiness to me." I wonder if he has.—Then, ag in, "Had I a fortune to support her!—But I will no more." O, generous Belville, little dost thou suspect my real rank and character. How severe is my fate!—But whither am I running? Stop, my presumptuous pen! How many young creatures in my situation might have been thrown upon the world, without a friend to protect them! On the contrary, I met with a friend (in Lady Mary Norton) from the first; and it pleased Heaven, before she died, to provide me with another in Lady Caroline Benson: I will therefore think no more of the letter, nor make any further comments upon its contents.

I have received my dear Julia's last kind epistle, but cannot comply with her well meant, friendly advice. Belville is certainly now lost to me for ever: however, I still have the pleasure of knowing that he once entertained a regard for me. He has conquered his passion without doubt, and I shall certainly endeavour to subdue mine; but I fear that can only be effected by flight.

I am just informed that Sir John Dudley wishes to speak with me on some urgent business; Heaven grant it may be to tell me he has recovered my ring!

Adieu.

One o'Clock.

GOOD Heavens! my dear Julia, what am I to think or expect from the following very singular interview and conversation!—But I will give you the whole in detail.

On entering the parlour, I was met at the door by Sir John Dudley, who eagerly exclaimed, "I trust I have brought Miss Meadows some agreeable intelligence. Your ring, Madam, is found; though I have it not with me," added he smiling.

"No,

"No, Sir! Pray where did you find it?"

"I did not enjoy that happiness, Madam! it was
"Lord Molton, who proposes to have the pleasure of
"presenting it to you himself this evening, as he
"wishes to ask you a few questions."

"Ask a few questions of me, Sir! exclaimed I reden-

"ning.

"Yes, Madam.—But why this perturbation?

"Because, because, Sir—I—I—Pray do you
"know the nature or purport of his Lordship's ques-

"tions?"

"I do not, Madam, upon my honour; but why
"does my dear Miss Meadows appear to be so much
"alarmed at Lord Molton's intended visit?"

"Indeed, Sir John, (returned I, having a little re-
"covered myself) I am not alarmed at all—no, no—
"not at all alarmed—on the contrary, I shall be ex-
"tremely happy to see Lord Molton, and will cheer-
"fully answer any questions his Lordship may be
"pleased to propose to me."

After this I made a hasty curtsey, and immediately left the room. Sir John stood amazed—and well he might; for it is neither unnatural nor improbable for him to suppose that I may have stole the ring.

But what, my dear, can Lord Molton mean or intend by this visit? Surely he did not know my late uncle! Yet if he did, it does not follow that he should recollect him to have had such a ring:—in short, I am lost in conjecture and amazement.

Another interruption!—Sir Cecil Mowbray is below, and desires to speak with me. What can he want, I wonder?—We are to have company this evening. How strange that Lord Molton did not bring the ring himself this morning! He might then have asked what questions he pleased.—I forget Sir Cecil is waiting.—Adieu, my dear friend! for I shall have no time to add more to this, than that I am always yours,

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

Sir John Dudley to Sir Charles Wilmot.

WELL, my friend ! I suppose you think I am dead ; the receipt of this will, however, prove to the contrary.—So much by way of preface.

Lord Molton has been in town a fortnight, but, for reasons best known to himself, desired I would keep his arrival in England a secret ; and you may be sure that I have punctually obeyed his orders. Amongst a variety of other questions he has at intervals proposed to me, he has enquired if I had any thoughts of wedlock. But I will endeavour to give you the whole of our conversation, as it may probably afford you some amusement.

“ And so, Dudley, you tell me that you have no thoughts of matrimony at present ?”

“ Why, my Lord, I confess that there are two Ladies to whom I have offered marriage, each of whom, however, has refused me.”

“ Why, surely, Jack, you an’t in love with two at once ?”

“ Indeed, my Lord, my answer will probably appear rather singular ; but if I speak honestly, I must acknowledge that I loved the one for her beauty of person and sweetness of temper ; and the other, because she is pretty, agreeable, and lively.”

“ And would neither of the Ladies accept of you ? Pray who are they ?”

“ Lady Caroline Benson, my Lord, and a Miss Meadows—her Ladyship’s companion.”

“ Indeed !”

“ As to Lady Caroline, your Lordship probably will recollect that soon after you went abroad, I had the happiness of seeing her at an assembly, and that I soon after made her a tender of my hand and heart, which she refused. As love was at that time

" time quite a novelty to me, I was neither offended
" nor pleased at her refusal, but returned to my studies
" with an heart by no means ill at ease. I did not
" quit College again for three years; when on coming
" to town I saw Lady Caroline at the play in compa-
" ny with another lady in an opposite box. Observ-
" ing the stranger to be very pretty, and being, as
" you know, Sir, a great admirer of female beauty,
" I immediately walked round to them, and was re-
" ceived by Lady Caroline with equal politeness and
" good-humour; but her fair companion scarcely
" opened her lips; in short, my Lord, I renewed my
" acquaintance with her Ladyship. As to Miss Mea-
" dows, the more I saw of her, the more I admired
" her: however, I thought myself bound in honour to
" offer myself again to Lady Caroline: I did so, and
" was again refused. Her Ladyship's second rejec-
" tion of my hand piqued me, and in a short time
" after I made a tender of my person and fortune to
" Miss Meadows, who likewise requested to be ex-
" cused in declining both; though at the same time
" she preferred me her friendship. I have continued
" to repeat my visits, as well as applications to Miss
" Meadows; but as I have many reasons for believing
" that her affections are engaged (though she can en-
" tertain no hopes of a return) I shall endeavour to
" conquer a hopeless passion; and as Lady Caroline
" has lately given me some encouragement, I am al-
" most tempted to offer myself to her for the third
" time. This, Sir, is the present state of my heart,
" which I fancy you will call a very whimsical one.
" I frankly acknowledge it to be so, as I am certainly
" in love with both ladies."

" But pray, who is this companion? what friends
" has she?"

" Those, Sir, are mysteries which I am unable to
" explain. Lady Caroline has often assured me that
" she was a stranger to both. A female friend of her

Ladyship

Lady JEMIMA GUZMAN. I

" Ladyship recommended Miss Meadows to her; and
" Jemima (here I thought Lord Molton seemed to
" start) having always appeared desirous of evading
" such questions, her Ladyship, from motives of de-
" licacy, has forbore to press her."

" Well Dudley, but you would not have married a
" girl whom nobody knows?"

" Certainly not, my Lord; and I entertain no
" doubt that Miss Meadows would never have con-
" sented to marry me or any other man, until she
" had proved herself not unworthy of our alliance;
" and certain I am, that her unaffected elegant man-
" ners as well as her refined acquired accomplishments,
" bespeak her rank in life to be much superior to that
" in which she appears to move at present. I am go-
" ing to attend the ladies to the Opera to-morrow
" evening; will it prove convenient to your Lordship
" to accompany me?"

" I am extremely sorry that I have made a prior
" engagement; but I have promised (and I wished
" you to have been of the party) to dine with some
" friends at the Thatched House. Can't you put off
" your engagement with the ladies? But don't men-
" tion I am come."

I immediately assented, and the next day accom-
panied his Lordship to the Thatched House.

As soon as dinner was over, he politely took leave
of his company, at the same time informing them
that I had obligingly promised to supply his place;
and though I did not much relish my situation, I was
obliged to accept it with an appearance of cheerfulness.
I saw his Lordship no more that evening, and the
party did not break up till near two the next morn-
ing.

A whole week passed (during which his Lordship
desired me not to mention his arrival to any of his
friends and acquaintance) before I called at Lady Ca-
roline's, when I found Miss Meadows in great distress

concerning a ring she had lost at the Opera, on the very night I was to have attended them; and yesterday morning as my Lord and I were fitting at breakfast, the following dialogue took place :

" Well Dudley, I have seen Lady Caroline and Miss Meadows."

" Indeed, Sir ! Pray have you been at her Ladyship's house ?

" No, I saw them at the Opera this day week, the very evening on which I left you to entertain my friends ; for, to tell you the truth, I had a strange longing to see this Miss Meadows before I was introduced to her. My curiosity is satisfied ; and——"

" Does your Lordship approve of her ?"

" I do, Dudley, though I don't think she can ever be your wife. If you see her and Lady Caroline to-day, don't mention this conversation. You may, perhaps, think my conduct whimsical ; but I have reasons for what I do."

For my part, I was quite at a loss, as I am still, to develope the meaning of this singular conversation as well as behaviour in his Lordship. He says, he don't think that Miss Meadows can ever be my wife ; but surely, it is rather strange, methinks, that he should so soon be able to form a judgment of the state of her heart and affections ! In short, I don't know what to make of his conduct : this evening may probably decide it ; I will therefore go on.

At supper, Lord Molton took a ring out of his pocket, at the same time saying, " There, Dudley, I have found this ring : don't you think it very beautiful as well as elegant ? I am inclined to think that it is the identical ring which has been advertised so repeatedly in the papers, and which you told me had been lost by Miss Meadows at the Opera."

" Good Heavens ! how fortunate ! (exclaimed I) it is her's indeed !—Dear Sir, where or how did you find it ?"

" I shan't

" I shan't tell you that, yet, Sir John (replied he, " smiling) I intend to present it to the lady, by way " of introducing myself to her."

" Then, Sir, you will allow me the honour of con- " ducting you to Lady Caroline's to-morrow morning, " as I know Miss Meadows has been extremely anxi- " ous about its recovery."

No, not till the evening : I want to know how Miss " Meadows became possessed of this ring."

" Pardon me, my Lord ! *how* Miss Meadows be- " came possessed of it ? What can your Lordship " mean ?"

" Don't suppose (cried he, laughing) that I suspect " her of having stolen it. However, you may go in " the morning and inform her, that I have found her " ring ; and that if she and Lady Caroline will give " me leave, I will wait on her in the evening with it, " and likewise trouble her with a few questions."

This was all I could extract from his Lordship, and we soon after retired to rest.

What to make of his strange message I know not; but as it is now near twelve o'clock, I shall proceed to Lady Caroline's, and deliver it, however strange, to Miss Meadows, for so I am afraid she will think it.

Adieu ! yours, &c.

JOHN DUDLEY.

LETTER LV.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

'S D E A T H ! what do you think, Maynard ? Thy friend Mowbray has made an offer of his hand and fortune to a girl who has neither money nor birth to recommend her, (so at least she endeavours to make the world think) and who, notwithstanding, has had the audacity to refuse both ! — I could shoot myself for madness !

You must know, then, I came to town yesterday, and this morning determined to pay a visit to this—(what the devil shall I call her?) this—this fair inflexible, or insensible—neither of those epithets is half bad enough—but they are the worst I can think of at present. Well, my valet dressed me; and really I thought, when I viewed myself in the glass, that I made a more than tolerable handsome appearance; but, confound it! the mirror certainly deceived me, as did likewise my rascal of a man, who, upon my saying, “Well, Fripon, do I look tolerable to-day?” answered, “Indeed, Sir, me tink you look var vel and ver handsome.”

My chair being ready, I stepped into it, and was carried to Berkley-Square. On enquiring for Miss Meadows, and being told she was at home, I desired the servant to present my respects, and inform her, that I requested the honour of a few moments conversation with her. The lady soon appeared. A reciprocal exchange of the usual compliments having passed between us, I ventured to enter upon the business of my visit, when, behold! she made the following reply: “I am fully sensible of the honour Sir Cecil
“ Mowbray intends me, by the partiality he has been
“ pleased to express for me; but I am too well pleased
“ with my present situation, humiliating as it may
“ appear, to wish to change it, at least for the pre-
“ sent.”

“ Perhaps, Madam, some happier man has en-
“ gaged your affections?”

“ No, Sir.”

“ Then, Madam, forgive me, if I presume to
“ hope, that a respectful perseverance may induce
“ you to think more favourably of me.”

“ My resolution, if once taken, Sir Cecil, I fel-
“ dom, if ever, alter: besides, I should be hateful to
“ myself, were I capable of keeping any man of ho-
“ nour in suspence; therefore, Sir, if you repeat
“ your

" your visits here, remember, I shall not consider
" them as addressed to me."

In vain did I try to shake this haughty beauty's resolution; and she was just going to quit the room, when Lady Caroline Benson and Lady Clara Belville entered.—She came back, upon Lady Clara's saying, " How do you do, Miss Meadows?" then seeing me, and starting, her Ladyship added, " I hope we don't
" interrupt you, Sir Cecil?"

" Not in the least, my Lady."

" Lud, Sir Cecil, I thought you had been out of town?"

" I returned yesterday, my Lady."

Miss Meadows then addressing herself to Lady Caroline, said, " Sir John Dudley with Lord Molton
" called upon your Ladyship this morning, and pro-
" pose themselves the pleasure of waiting upon you
" again this evening."

" I have seen Sir John too, my dear. The visit is
" to you, not to me.—Lady Clara, you and the Colo-
" nel will be here, I hope?"

" I will; but I can't answer for Belville." replied
her Ladyship, carelessly.

Lady Caroline then turning to me, " You, Sir
" Cecil, too, will, I trust, make one of our little
" party?"

" I am sorry I cannot do myself that honour, Lady
" Caroline, but I am engaged;" then taking up my
hat, and advancing to Miss Meadows, (who had
looked surprized at my behaviour to Lady Clara) said
in a low voice, at the same time taking her hand,
" Will you permit me Madam, to wait on you in
" the morning, in the hope of receiving a less ri-
" gorous sentence?"

" It will be an unnecessary trouble, Sir, (replied
" she, smiling) as I shall not revoke my sentence,
" as you are pleased to call it.

Finding her thus obdurate, I only bowed, and, repeating the same compliment to the other two ladies, (which was returned by Lady Clara rather stiffly) left the room and the house with a much heavier heart than I had entered it.

This girl, Maynard, certainly possesses the powers of witchcraft; for, like a magnet, she attracts all our sex to her shrine. 'Spite of every thing I have said in the beginning of this letter, I am more in love with her than ever: and I verily believe, if she would accept of me, I should become a reformed, or, as the saints call it, a *new man*. Thus, you see, Maynard, I have almost reached the top of the stool of repentance, though I am sorely afraid of my foot slipping just as I attain the summit; for, in the mind I am now in, never shall any other woman than Jemima Meadows claim a husband in

Yours sincerely,

CECIL MOWBRAY.

LETTER LVI.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

My dear Julia.

I HAVE no doubt of your feeling the strongest emotions of surprize, when you see the signature of this letter, though the conversation which I introduced into my last, as having passed between Sir John Dudley, now Marquis de Guzman, and myself, may, perhaps, in some measure, have prepared you for the very extraordinary as well as interesting scene which succeeded in a few hours after.

I waited with no little impatience for the evening. At seven o'clock the servant opening the drawing-room door, announced Colonel Belville, Lady Clara Belville, Captain Hillgrove, Colonel Molesworth, and Mr. Darcy. About half an hour afterwards a violent rap-

ping

ping at the hall-door was heard, which was immediately followed by the entrance of Lord Molton with Sir John Dudley. His Lordship (who appeared to be not more than fifty, with a fair complexion, fine expressive blue eyes, and rather inclinable to be tall) first paid his compliments to Lady Caroline, and then bowed to the rest of the company, at the same time saying, "Which is Miss Meadows, Sir John?"

Dudley instantly advancing, addressed me with, "Give me leave to present Lord Molton to you Madam." His Lordship then taking my hand, made me some very handsome compliments; after which we reseated ourselves, and Lady Caroline called for tea. I never in my life longed so much as I then did, for the absence of the servants. As soon as they were gone, Lord Molton arose, and again taking my hand, "Sir John Dudley, Madam, I presume, has informed you, that I am in possession of a ring, which you lost lately at the opera, as also that I had a few questions to ask you; shall I be deemed impertinent in proposing them?"

"Not in the least, my Lord," though I trembled exceedingly.

"In the first place, Madam, allow me the pleasure of restoring your ring; but pray, have you any particular value for it?"

"So great, Sir, that it would have made me miserable not to have recovered it."

"Was it given you by any near relation?"

"It was, Sir, by an uncle, whom I have had the misfortune to lose."

"Is he dead, then?"

"He is; and often have I had occasion to remember some lines in which it was inclosed when he presented it to me, and to lament his loss."

"Your name then, Madam, is not Meadows?"

"It is not, Sir; it is Guzman."

The company looked with surprize on each other, but said nothing.

" Pray, how long is it since you heard of your uncle's death ? "

" Between four and five years, or longer."

" Was you in England then ?

" No, my Lord, I was in Spain."

" Have you entirely forgot him ? "

" Yes ; for when he presented me with this ring I was in England, and not more than seven years old ; though perfectly well do I remember his words at parting from me : " God bless you my Jemima ! Take this ring and remember the lines which accompany it."

Here tears rushed into my eyes, and Lord Molton seemed equally affected.

" Then, Madam, the name of Meadows is only assumed ? "

" It is so, my Lord ; for I am only daughter to the late Marquis de Guzman."

Here every one except his Lordship exclaimed, " Gracious Heaven ! "

" Have you never heard that your late father had a son by a former marriage ? "

" Yes, Sir, I know he had ; and likewise, that the infant was left by his mother in the care of Lord George my uncle ; but I am totally ignorant what became of him after Lord George's death."

" It is now my turn, dear Madam, to make myself known. Know then, lovely Jemima, (at the same time taking me in his arms) that your uncle is not dead, but that it is HE who has now the inexpressible pleasure of folding you to his heart."

Good Heaven, my Julia, what did I not feel at that moment ! I thought my heart would have burst thro' my stays ; and had not a friendly shower of tears come to my relief, I must have fainted. My uncle seemed not less affected than myself, but at length recovering himself, continued :

" Prepare

" Prepare for a further surprize—though you can't
 " be more so than you will be, my Dudley (at the same
 " time taking Sir John's hand)—Receive this worthy
 " young man, my Jemima, as your BROTHER ; and
 " you (turning to him) this more than woman under
 " the endearing title of SISTER. You have no longer
 " a claim to the name of Dudley, but must now af-
 " sume that of Marquis de Guzman !"

The power of utterance was denied both my brother and myself, as indeed it was to every one else, till at last Lady Clara broke the charm by saying, " Lord ! " who could have thought all this ? For Heaven's sake, my dear Lady Jemima, tell us all about it, " for I am dying with curiosity."

Colonel Belville turning to her, with a look that plainly indicated how much he was amazed at her ill-breeding, replied, " No, my Lady ; it will be more proper for us to retire, and leave Lady Jemima and Lord Molton in private."

Lady Clara coloured, and rose from her seat ; when finding myself somewhat recovered from the surprize I had been thrown into, I begged that I might not disturb the company, as I could retire to another room with Lord George. Lady C. Benson, however, not seconding my request, all the company took leave, though it was evident Lady Clara had much rather have staid. She paid me some compliments on the discovery of my uncle, as did all the gentlemen, except Belville, who only made me a respectful bow ; and turning to my brother (who had sat with the utmost impatience the whole time, as he, it seems, knew nothing of his birth and connections), said, " Your title and fortune, my Lord, are too trifling to occasion much joy in such a worthy heart as you have always possessed ; but the happiness you will experience in calling that young lady by the endearing name of Sister, renders it unnecessary for any one to wish you more."

The Marquis bowed, but seemed unable to speak : the Colonel then taking his Lady's hand, after another respectful bow to me, quitted the room, and was immediately followed by the rest of the company.

Lady Caroline now rose, and taking my hand, said, " My dear Lady Jemima, how shall I express " my joy at a discovery so interesting and full of hap- " pines to you ! If I have ever been deficient in re- " spect, which I am afraid I have"—

Here I interrupted her with, " My dear Lady Ca- " roline, stop ! I am under obligations to you that I " can never repay ; and from henceforth let us be " friends, as we have long been companions. Let " me present to you, my uncle, and to you, my bro- " ther, a lady who has been my only friend except " one (meaning you, my Julia) for these two years " past."

Lord Molton and my brother each saluted her, when the former told her he should always consider her as his third child ; " for (continued he, taking my brother's " hand) this is my son by adoption ; and this (taking " mine) is a child I have loved with a parental affec- " tion from the first moment of her birth ; and as to " you, my Lady, I must contrive to have you (con- " tinued he, laughing) for a daughter. Now, my " dear children, be seated, and let me hear my dear " Jemima's history from the time of her quitting " England."

I then entered into a circumstantial relation of my melancholy story, which drew tears from every one present. By the time I had finished, it was too late for my uncle to enter into any particulars respecting himself ; but telling Lady Caroline, that he and the Marquis would dine with her the next day, when he would entertain us with his adventures, each of the gentlemen saluted us, and took their leave.

As soon as we were alone, her Ladyship again intreated my forgiveness for any flights she might have shewn

shewn me; when I assured her that they were totally obliterated from my memory, and that I should ever retain the most grateful sense of the friendly protection and assistance with which she had honoured me; in short, my Julia, we have agreed to live together as usual; and as a proof of my confidence in and affection for her, I offered to entrust her with the papers containing the story of my brother's birth. She was much pleased at this mark of my friendship and esteem, which she said she accepted with peculiar pleasure; and having accordingly given her the original Pacquets from which I copied yours, we retired to our apartments; I to write my Julia this long letter, and her Ladyship to peruse the papers, for she has not yet rung for her maid to undress her.

And now, my dear friend, what think you of this eventful scene? For my own part, I can scarcely persuade myself but that the whole is a dream.

I am extremely anxious to hear my uncle's history. I just asked him if my mother was alive; he told me no. I am sorry for it, as I could have wished to have received her forgiveness and blessing.

Write to me by the return of the post, my dear Julia; and continue to believe me at all times and in every situation,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,
JEMIMA GUZMAN.

LETTER LVII.

The Marquis De Guzman to Sir Charles Wilmot.

Dear Wilmot,

YOUR surprize at the receipt of this letter cannot exceed that which I have felt, and still continue to feel. Well might Lord Molton say, the lovely Jemima

Jemima Meadows could never be my wife :—but I will give you the particulars of my very singular history*.

Thus you see, Wilmot, that instead of a Knight I am a Marquis ; a strange metamorphosis, truly ! and that Miss Meadows, instead of being entitled to that name, is a Lady by birth, and sister to me. Gracious Heaven ! what might have been the consequence of my love for her, I almost shudder to think. It is true, my uncle always desired I would not marry till he had seen the lady ; but suppose he had died before any of the preceding discoveries and explanations had taken place, into what an abyss of misery might we have plunged ourselves !—But I will leave off supposing, and look forward to nothing but happiness.

Lord Molton has asked me if I am still willing to marry Lady Caroline Benson ? I answered in the affirmative ; for what obligations do I not owe her Ladyship on the score of my charming sister, whom she has so nobly and so generously protected and befriended ? We dine with them to-day, when my uncle promises to entertain us with his interesting story : I must therefore prepare for my visit.—But indeed, I am so tired of writing, that I can scarcely hold my pen ; for I have not been in bed the whole night, as you may suppose by the enormous packet I have wrote.—Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me yours, as usual,

GUZMAN.

LETTER LVIII.

Miss Thornton to Lady Jemima Guzman.

JOY, joy to my dear Lady Jemima ! How truly happy did the receipt of your last letter make me !

* Here the Marquis introduces the various incidents which have already appeared in his sister Lady Jemima's Letter to Miss Thornton ; together with the story of his birth, as related in the first volume. See page 43—59.

—My

—My father too is as much rejoiced as I am, and sends you his most sincere and hearty congratulations.

I long to hear whence the report originated of your uncle's death.—I hope that you will now experience no further cause of affliction ; that your peace of mind will be entirely restored ; and that I shall soon have the pleasure to see my friend united to some worthy man, who will obliterate the remembrance of all her past mortifications and sufferings.—Nay, don't shake your head, Jemima, think of Belville, and cry, " Oh ! " it can never be !"—Let me see ! There's Sir Cecil Mowbray !—If your Ladyship would vouchsafe to take compassion on him, he would soon quit the giddy Lady Clara, and attach himself solely to your lovely self. You say he is too great a rake. Why surely, my dear, you would not marry a man who never spoke to any woman besides yourself. For my part, I think Sir Cecil is a very pretty fellow.

" Where, in the name of wonder, did you see him !" exclaims my Jemima.

Shall I tell you, or shall I not ?—Yes, I will.

You must know, then, that I saw him on a visit at Sir Thomas Glendower's, about two years ago, where I had the honour of dancing with him, but have never seen him since : at that time I ranked him among the *Very Agreeables*. If your Ladyship, therefore, don't chuse to have him, pray inform me of it, that I may take a trip to town, and take him off your hands.—To tell you a truth, I have thought a great deal of him ever since, though I dare say *he* has never bestowed a single reflection on me.—I must conclude here, however, or my dear Lady Jemima may, perhaps, be inclined to suspect, from this very extraordinary and unexpected confession, the sanity of the intellects of

Her Ladyship's sincere friend,

JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER

LETTER LIX.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

A BOUT three o'clock Lord Molton and the Marquis were announced. Dinner was immediately introduced, and being speedily dispatched, the servants were dismissed, with orders to admit no company; when my uncle thus began :

" When I took leave of you, my dear Jemima, I was preparing to make the tour of Europe.—After having visited the most remarkable places in Holland, France, Italy, and Germany, and endeavoured to profit by my observations on the manners and customs of each country, I proposed to direct my course towards Spain, when I unexpectedly received the melancholy intelligence of my father's death, and of my mother's being also (it was feared) in a dying state. I instantly hired post-horses; but, though I travelled night and day, arrived too late to pay the last duties to either. Shocked at the indifference with which my brother appeared to treat their memories, I could not forbear expressing my surprize at this behaviour in terms which he resented so highly, that after expressing himself very warmly, he left me with a declaration that he did not wish to see me any more. I determined to quit Spain immediately, though extremely desirous of seeing you; a pleasure, however, I could not enjoy, as you were at that time placed for the benefit of your health, which had suffered very much from a violent fever, at one of the Marquis's villas in the country.

" Determined, however, to see my brother once more, I solicited and obtained an interview with him; when, having been informed of the unfeeling treatment you experienced from your mother, I recommended you, in the most pathetic terms, to his paternal protection. He heard me in sullen silence, but made

made no reply. I then asked if he had no desire to see his son, who had been left under my care in England, as also, whether he did not intend to acknowledge him? He immediately flew into a violent rage, forbade me ever to mention the subject any more, and protested, in the most solemn terms, that he never would own or receive him as his child. This declaration produced a very warm altercation between us; in which, after having treated his conduct, manners, and principles, with equal severity and freedom, I left him in disgust, and putting up a hearty prayer for my Jemima's preservation, quitted Spain, determined to proceed immediately for England, and remove my nephew from Eton (where I had placed him under the care of a most worthy old lady, named Woodward) to Trinity College, Cambridge.

" My first business on my arrival was to visit my son, as I always called him, and whom I had not seen since he was five years of age. He was now turned of sixteen; and I was not a little pleased to find him so much improved in person and accomplishments. After asking him if he was willing to go to the University, he expressed his readiness to comply with any commands I might impose upon him; and it was on our journey thither that he first questioned me concerning his parents: when I told him, that both his father and mother had died in his infancy, before he could be sensible of their loss, and that they had requested me to undertake the office of his guardian. I ought to have mentioned before, that in consequence of one of my godfathers having left me a very considerable fortune while I was upon my tour, I had been obliged by his will to assume the name of Moton; and having accidentally directed Mrs. Woodward always to address me by that name in her ward's presence, by that means young Dudley (as I had called him) never knew me by any other appellation; and as my brother and I kept up no correspondence during the abovementioned period,

period, and we parted so abruptly afterwards, I am inclined to believe that even he too was ignorant of my having exchanged his family-name for that of my godfather.

" Having settled Dudley to my satisfaction, I again quitted England, with an intention of taking a trip to Lisbon, and returning through Spain, when our vessel was unfortunately captured on its voyage by an American privateer (after a smart engagement, in which several lives were lost on both sides) the Captain of which instantly steered with his prize to Boston in North America. However, I soon obtained my liberty, by paying down a sum of money for my ransom; and this accident, I suppose, must have given rise to the report of my death.

" As soon as I had regained my liberty, I formed an acquaintance with some English officers who were there on their parole, and spent a month very agreeably with them. I then obtained a passport, which carried me in safety to New-York.

" When I quitted England, I had proposed to return in six months. As four had already passed away, and as it would have been impossible for me to have visited Spain and got back to England at the expiration of the allotted time, I determined to take my passage directly there; where I arrived, without any further accident, and where I now resolved to remain to superintend Dudley's education.

" A year and a half had elapsed (during which time I wrote several times to my brother, his lady, and my Jenaima, but received no answer) when I was attacked by a dangerous pulmonary complaint, occasioned by a cold I caught in hunting. My disorder in a few weeks had made such a rapid progress, that my physicians judged it necessary for me to visit the South of France. Having settled my affairs, and deposited Dudley's history with my will, that, in case of my decease, he might know the history of his parents (I had before

before procured a baronetage for him, as well as settled a liberal income upon him, with orders for his quitting the university when he arrived at the age of one-and-twenty. I accordingly proceeded to Montpellier, from whence I was soon after ordered to Lisbon, where I continued to reside near two years, before I got the better of my disorder; but being by that time tolerably well recovered, I determined to return to England through Spain, that I might procure some information of my brother and his family. But guess my surprize and astonishment, when, on my arrival, I was informed by the servants (who were all strangers to me) that he had been dead near five years. On desiring to see the Marchioness, I was informed, that she was too much indisposed to see any company. However, on my announcing my name and relation to her, the servant instantly conducted me to her. On my entering the apartment where she was sitting, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of sickness, she gave a violent shriek, and instantly fainted away. My surprize at this incident, however, was removed, when, on her recovery, she told me of the report which had prevailed of my death. After having explained the circumstances which had given rise to this mistake, I enquired after my brother and niece; when she related the particulars of his death. As to Jemima (continued she) I am totally ignorant where she is, as, to avoid being married to a man I had chosen for her husband, she has been eloped from me near four years. Here she entered into a circumstantial detail of your story, from the first introduction of the Marquis D'Almeyda, to your subsequent confinement in and escape from the castle; after which she said, that she had never enjoyed any happiness since; and that she had at one time proposed to go to England herself in search of you, but, being prevented by illness, had dispatched a trusty servant thither for that purpose, who returned without being able to procure any tidings. She upbraided herself very much

for

for her unkindness to you, but added, that if she lived to see you again, she would endeavour to make you amends for the injuries and indignities you might have suffered.

" The exertions she had made, as well as the painful sensations of shame, remorse, and regret, which she had manifestly felt in reciting this narrative, had so fatigued and overpowered her, that she sunk on her pillow, and I left her in a situation much easier to be conceived than described. I immediately went to the odious castle, and on enquiring for the old woman, was told that she was dead, and that her son was gone no one knew whither. As I could meet with no person to give me the least intelligence of you, I returned to the Marchioness's, whose disorder I was told by her servants had increased so much during my short absence, that she had been scarcely able to speak, and that she had expressed great anxiety to see me again. On entering her chamber, and advancing to her bedside, she pressed my hand, and made several ineffectual attempts to speak : at last, however, she desired to be raised in her bed, when she thus addressed me in a faint expiring tone of voice : I still hope, Lord George, that you will live to see *your* Jemima (for *mine* I dare not call her) ; when I request you will not forget to tell her, that in my last moments I implored her forgiveness, and, as some atonement for the distresses I may have occasioned her, have bequeathed her every thing in my power to bestow. Adieu ! God forgive me ! So saying, she sunk on her pillow, and I, unable longer to sustain a scene so affecting, hurried out of the room, and in about two hours after was informed that she was no more.

" I should before have told you, that during my residence in Lisbon, I had the good fortune to rescue a gentleman, whose name is Mordaunt," (This name, I thought, Julia, was familiar to me, though I did not at that time recollect where I had heard it) " from the

the hands of some assassins, who had been hired to murder him. The assistance I had been so fortunate to afford him on this occasion, produced an acquaintance between us, which soon ripened into the warmest friendship. He told me his history, and I really compassionated him much. His disappointments in life had affected his spirits and soured his temper so much, as to occasion some singularities in his manner and behaviour, which were mistaken by many gentlemen for misanthropy ; whilst the ladies, from being accustomed to receive no answer when they spoke to him, had given him the title of *the Silent Man.*" (I now, my dear, began to recollect who it must be.) " Mr. Mordaunt having accompanied me to Spain, saw my distress. I told him the history of my family, when he expressed great concern for the uneasiness I appeared to labour under on my dear Jemima's account ; and offered, as my affairs would not permit me to leave Spain for some time, to go to England in search of you. This I readily consented to ; and having previously given him a picture of you, which I found in a dressing-box belonging to your father, he set off on his expedition.

" Several months elapsed before I heard from him : at last, however, I received a letter informing me, that he was in hopes he had discovered my Jemima. He added, that you had assumed the name of Meadows, and lived as a companion to a Lady Caroline Benson ; that you seemed to be finely accomplished, and had many admirers ; that the picture bore a strong resemblance of you, but had not in the least flattered you ; and that every one seemed to think there was some mystery in your birth.

" This was the substance of his letter, and you may be assured that the contents delighted me not a little. I resolved instantly to hasten to England. Upon waiting on my friend Mordaunt, he told me, that the very evening before he had an opportunity of speaking to

to you at Lady Clara Belville's rout, and fancied that he had given you a very strange opinion of him. I now only waited to obtain a sight of you, as I did not chuse to call at Lady Caroline's; I determined therefore to contrive to see you at some public place, as I had several affairs to settle before I could discover myself.

" One morning, in the course of some conversation with Dudley, he happened to mention your intention of going to the Opera in the evening. I thought this an excellent opportunity to see you; and having framed an excuse for putting off his engagement to attend you, I sent for Mordaunt to accompany me. I placed myself in a corner of the house, in order to keep myself as unobserved as possible; but when I saw you enter, I could scarcely keep my seat. My friend watched you narrowly; and, on your pulling off your glove, observed you to drop something, but could not discover what it was, till on your leaving the Pit, he perceived something glitter, and, on picking it up, found it was a RING. On my examining it, I immediately knew it to be the identical ring I had given you.—All anxiety for your safety now vanished, as doubt no longer remained. In a week's time all my affairs being settled to my satisfaction, I determined to make myself known—the rest you are acquainted with."

" And now," continued Lord George, rising and taking my brother's hand and mine, " let me once more present you to each other. To you, my Lord, whose property it is, I resign your father's estate; and you, my Jemima, I shall immediately put in possession of the ample fortune bequeathed you by your parents. Continue to love each other as you have hitherto done, and permit me to consider you both as my children. Let me hope too, (added he, taking Lady Caroline's hand) that I shall very soon be able to acknowledge another child in you, Madam." Lady

Caroline

Caroline looked astonished, but seemed as if she would not prove cruel to my brother a third time.

It being late, my uncle and brother took their leave, and we retired to rest.

Good Heaven ! my Julia ! what a metamorphosis have I experienced in these two days !—My poor mother ! Would it had pleased the Almighty to have spared her life, that I might have experienced her maternal tenderness ! But his will be done !

LADY CLARA, unable longer to restrain her curiosity, came yesterday morning, and entering my dressing-room just as I was in the middle of my story, exclaimed, “ My dear, dear Lady Jemima, for “ Heaven’s sake, tell me all about this strange affair, “ for I am absolutely dying to hear it.”

I smiled, and gave her Ladyship the outline of my story.

“ And so (replied she, when I had finished it) you “ preferred living in this dependant state rather “ than marry the Marquis D’Almeyda ?”

“ Certainly, my lady ; for any state was preferable “ to an alliance with the man I detested. Besides, “ when I marry, I intend it shall be with one whom “ I sincerely love, that I may in every point religiously “ fulfil my marriage vow.”

“ Lord-a-mercy ! why, I have never thought of “ mine since the first day I became Belville’s wife.”

“ I am sorry for it, my Lady.”

“ Well, but my dear, do you know, that if I was “ not married, I should set my cap at your brother, in “ order to be related to you ?

“ Your Ladyship would not succeed, I believe, as “ the Marquis is engaged.”

“ Ah ! Lord ! is he ?—To whom—to whom my “ dear ?”

“ I am not at liberty to mention that, my Lady,” “ replied I laughing.

“ Well,

" Well, I don't care, as I shall soon know it, for
" your affair is half over the Town already."

" I may thank your Ladyship for that, I fancy."

" Aye, to be sure ! You would not have it kept
" a secret, would you ? But it grows late, I must be
" gone.—I had almost forgot to tell you, that Captain
" Hillgrove has left us.—Adieu ! Call soon"—and
" away she tripped..

What a giddy creature it is ! Poor Belville ! I pity
him, as he can't be happy.

And so, my dear, Sir Cecil Mowbray is a favou-
rite of yours ? How fly you were not to let me know it
sooner ! Well, I have heard a tolerable character of
him lately ; and if he will promise to reform, he shall
have my Julia.

I am so tired that I can add no more, except that I
am always

Yours affectionately,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

P. S. Captain Hillgrove did not call before he
left Town.

LETTER LX.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

GOOD Heaven ! what a surprize, Burton ! Miss Meadows proves to be a Lady by birth.—I am amazed beyond expression ! The particulars of this discovery, however, I must defer till we meet.—Poor Belville, how I pity him ! For my part, I cannot be happy till I see him so ; but when that will be, Heaven knows. You say in your last letter. " Why do
" you reproach yourself ? You did not compel him to
" marry Lady Clara." True, my friend ; but I was
contemptible enough to suggest any and every thing
which might depreciate Miss Meadows (now Lady Je-
mima Guzman) in his opinion ; in short, I practised
every

every art in my power to persuade him to marry Lady Clara. I cannot see Lady Jemima again, having proved an instrument of rendering her, as well as the deserving Belville, unhappy, for I am certain she loves him : I shall therefore set off for Burton Hall to-morrow morning ; and having not yet informed Henry of my intention, shall now drop my pen, that I may tell him, as I hear his voice in the hall.

Evening.

I Went to Belville immediately, and acquainted him with my resolution of setting off for the Hall to-morrow. He appeared surprized, but desired I would favour him with a quarter of an hour's conversation. "Lady Clara (added he) wishes me to invite Lady Jemima and her brother to spend a few weeks at our country-seat, this summer : I cannot say that I much approve of her request ; do you ?"

" Certainly not."

" I should be very sorry to have Lady Jemima of the party ; for though I have now banished all love for her Ladyship from my heart, yet to be a daily witness of her amiable qualities, might tempt me to draw unpleasant comparisons, which, perhaps, might tend to render my wife uneasy ; and, as I have before said, she shall never think I slight her for another, except she will be weak enough to introduce a handsomer woman than herself into my house, when I would not chuse to answer for the consequence, if the fair-one shewed no aversion to me. Eh, Edward, what say you ?"

He said this with a laugh, though it was evident his heart did not correspond with his countenance. " What you say (returned I) is very just ; but I believe there is no danger of Lady Jemima's accepting the invitation."

" If I were certain of that, I would ask her, were it only to please my wife. But what makes you think she would not accept it ?"

" I can

" I can assign no particular reason, except that
" having just discovered her uncle and brother, I
" should suppose she would rather wish to spend her
" time with them. But you are not going out of town
" yet, Belville ?"

" O no ; I expect my sister every day, to pass a
" month with us ; neither would my wife, I suppose,
" chuse to leave town till after the Birth-day.—Don't
" you think, my friend, Lady Clara is much altered
" for the better, since Sir Cecil Mowbray has desisted
" from visiting us ? In my opinion, she is quite ano-
" ther woman. To be sure, she has still many childish
" levities ; but I hope to wean her even from these in
" a short time, and then I trust we shall be very happy.
" As to Lady Jemima, while she was Miss Meadows,
" I could not so well curb my passion ; but since she
" is become Lady Jemima Guzman, my sentiments
" are totally changed ; for if I had even been single,
" I do not think that I should have now ventured to
" offer myself."

" No ! why not ?" cried I, with a precipitation
for which I was afterwards very angry with myself.

" No, Hillgrove, no ! When she was Miss Mea-
" dows, had I possessed a fortune to support her, and
" could have obtained the consent of my friends, I
" should have been proud to have called her mine.
" But it shall never be said, that Belville, who re-
" jected her while she was poor and friendless, sued
" for her the moment he came to the knowledge of
" her real situation in life. No, my pride would not
" suffer me to act so contemptibly ; and were I dis-
" engaged to-morrow, I would shun her just as ea-
" gerly as I do now."

" Ay ! well, these are all punctilio.—But how do
" you propose to put off Lady Clara."

" Why, I shall tell her, that there is time enough
" to think of it, as we shall not go into the country
" these two or three months ; and as Clara, you
know,

" know, is very easy, I dare say she will be very well
" contented, and run to her harpsichord, as usual,
" in high good humour."

Here our conversation ended. But notwithstanding Henry's bravado, I am very certain that he has not yet conquered his passion for the charming Jemima. However, I think with him, that Lady Clara is much altered for the better, and most fervently wish she may continue so, as I am certain the Colonel would then root every object from his breast; but I very much fear, that with the first new face which comes in her way, she will again play the same game she did with Sir Cecil Mowbray.

Adieu, Burton! I propose being with you by Thursday next, till when believe me

Yours as usual,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER LXI.

Miss Thornton to Lady Jemima Guzman.

I Received my dear Lady Jemima's packet last Tuesday, for which I am very much obliged to her, but shall forbear making any comments on the behaviour of the Marchioness, as I am sure my Jemima's disposition is too tender and affectionate, not to be pained by any strictures, however just, on her mother's conduct. But, my dear, you forgot to mention *The Silent Man*. Angry as you was with him at Lady Clara's rout, you see he was one of your good Genii, as but for him you probably would not have been so soon discovered.

And so your brother Dudley (for I think I shall always call him by that name) is going to take Lady Caroline to him for a wife! I sincerely wish him all happiness. Pray, my dear, what do the *beau monde* say of your metamorphosis, as you call it here? I long to know.

I find my dear Lady Jemima has positively set it down for a fact, that I am over-head-and-ears in love with Sir Cecil Mowbray. Why, to confess the truth,

I don't know how it happens to be so—but I believe, were he to offer himself, I should not be able to refuse him: however, I can expect no proposal from that quarter while your Ladyship remains unmarried.

I have lately had two offers; the one from Mr. Glendower, son of Sir Thomas, the other from young Carey; but neither of these gentlemen are adapted to my taste; and very much are they offended, to think that I—a country girl!—should refuse them: but I shall reserve my person and fortune for something better than gamblers and fox-hunters.

I impatiently expect another letter from you, and hope to receive one soon. I fancy, as Lady Clara says, Captain Hillgrove is a great favourite; but let me hear all about him, and every body else, the first opportunity. My dear friend, adieu!

Yours affectionately,

JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER LXII.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

WELL, I always said she was not what she appeared to be!—Don't you remember, Maynard, that I told you Miss Meadows was something better than she seemed willing to let the world think. 'Faith, so she is; for, instead of being an humble companion to Lady Caroline Benson, she is the only daughter of a Marquis; and, what is stranger still, she is sister to Dudley! How the devil they have managed it, I know not; but the story current about town is, that the father of Miss Meadows, otherwise Lady Jemima Guzman, had this Dudley by a former wife, but would never acknowledge him; that Lord George, his brother, at the dying request of his mother, took him under his protection, and brought him up as the son of a deceased friend; that this Miss Meadows, who is

is by a second marriage, eloped from her mother, in order to avoid being united to a man she detested, and came over to this country, where she has now resided several years, during which time she has kept her real birth and connections concealed ; but at last, from the loss of a ring, was accidentally discovered by her uncle.

This is all I know of the story. How far it may be true, I cannot pretend to say ; but Dudley is now Marquis de Guzman, and possessed of a princely estate ; and Miss Meadows is his sister, with a fortune of more than fifty thousand pounds.—Ah, Maynard ! I should have no objection to enter even the noose of matrimony with such a woman and such a fortune ; but she is resolute and will not have me. She told me this morning, that she was much obliged to me for my good opinion of her ; “ but I assure you, Sir Cecil (continued she), “ that I have not yet seen the man whom I can with “ any propriety think of for a husband.”

With propriety !—Rather an equivocal reply, methinks ; is it not, Maynard ? for she has certainly *seen* a man whom she could like. Who he is, I know not ; neither shall I puzzle myself to discover him.

I told her she must not banish me from her presence. She smiled, and answered, that she should be always happy to see me as an acquaintance, but hoped I would think of nothing more. I bowed, sighed, whined out my sorrow, like all other rejected lovers, and took my leave.

All her old lovers are teasing her from morning till night, as she is not a tyrannical mistress ; for she is civil and polite to all her slaves. Both Darcy and Molefworth are dying for her, though I dare swear neither of them love her more than I do ; but the devil take me if I pine myself to death for any of the pretty creatures !

Well, this is a tolerable long letter ; yet have I not once mentioned Lady Clara Belville. The reason is,

that I have forgot her, as indeed her Ladyship has forgot me. When we meet in public, she gives me a vacant stare, which I return with a careless bow, and she commonly answers it by a nod : thus you see what terms we are on.

I have been thinking, Maynard, 'tis a pity that Lady Clara and myself had not been joined together ; for each would have been so indifferent about the other, that we might both have pursued our own schemes without giving either any uneasiness.—Apropos, her Ladyship seems to like her husband rather better than she did ; though the good-natured world are pleased to say they will not long continue so, as they take it for granted that she will fall in love with the first new face she may like better. This is what the *Ton* says, and by Jupiter I believe it. If I was her husband, I think I would sooner bear the weight of my horns, than be tied to her for life.

My pen is tired as well as myself ; therefore I must put a period to this long scribble from

Yours,
CECIL MOWBRAY.

P. S. Bromley is returned back a greater coxcomb than he went. He is raised to the rank of Colonel---through Heaven knows for what.

LETTER LXIII.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

INDEED, my dear Julia, I was very ungrateful in not mentioning *The Silent Man*, but I was too tired to add a single line to my last pacquet. I will, however, endeavour to do him justice, by giving him a conspicuous place in my present letter.

The day after Lord George entertained us with the relation of his story, he brought Mr. Mordaunt to visit me. I believe, my dear, I have never given you his portrait ;

portrait ;—take it as follows : Mr. Mordaunt is tall, though not lusty—black eyes—complexion dark—but there is a kind of melancholy in his countenance which inspires you with pity

After complimenting me on having so fortunately discovered my uncle, he made an apology for his odd behaviour at Colonel Belville's ; I begged, however, he would not mention it. A conversation now took place, in which Mr. Mordaunt by no means proved himself the *Silent Man*, but threw out many judicious observations both on men and manners. Our party, however, was too soon, in my opinion, broke up, by the entrance of Sir Cecil Mowbray ; when my uncle and his friend rose, and wished me a good morning, the latter at the same time telling me, he should do himself the honour of sometimes calling to enquire after my health.

Sir Cecil stared at Mr. Mordaunt, and asked, when he was gone, if he too was one of my admirers ?

I told him he was not ; for Mr. Mordaunt only visited me as my uncle's friend.

Indeed, my dear Julia, I wish you would come and take this Sir Cecil off my hands, for he follows me like a shadow.

I took occasion to mention your name to Lady Caroline, while he was here ; he started, and turning to me, said, " Pray Madam, is it Miss Thornton of Wiltshire ? "

" Yes, Sir ; do you know her ? "

" I had the pleasure of seeing her several times, about three years ago, while I was on a visit to Sir Thomas Glendower ; and I think her a most agreeable young lady."

" Indeed, Sir, she is, and one of my most particular friends."

This was all that passed, and he soon after made his congé.

You say in your letter, that you think, with Lady Clara Belville, Captain Hillgrove is a great favourite of mine. Indeed, my dear, he is, as I think him, well-behaved, sensible, polite, and very different from most of the petit-maitres which at present grace, or more properly disgrace, our army. So far he is certainly a great favourite, but no farther; and I do assure you, were the Captain to offer himself, he would not be the object of my choice; neither have I yet seen the man I can think of for a husband. I know my Julia smiles at this. To be sure, I did love Colonel Belville; but as he is married, I think it my duty to forget that I ever viewed him in any other light than that of a friend. As to matrimony, I have not the least inclination for it at present. I may, perhaps, be deemed difficult; but I intend never to marry till I see *him* I can thoroughly love.

I called yesterday morning on Lady Clara Belville, and was ushered into her dressing-room. On my entrance, she exclaimed, "My dear Lady Jemima, "how do you do?—For my part, I am dying with "the head-ach."

"I am sorry for it, my Lady. How is the Colonel?"

"Extremely well: he is gone to meet his sister."

"Miss Belville is coming to town then?"

"Yes, to spend a month or two: I wish she was married."

"Why, my Lady?"

"Why! Because husbands' sisters are generally placed over us wives as spies."

"I will not pretend to deny this may not sometimes prove true; but I am certain that Colonel Belville can have no such intention; neither can I persuade myself that his sister would undertake such an unfriendly office. Besides, surely your Ladyship would do nothing to incur censure, unless from inadvertence."

"Ah!"

" Ah ! la ! but I should ; for I am continually doing something or other to give the Colonel occasion to find fault with me."

" Dear Lady Clara, how sorry am I to hear you talk thus ! Surely you are not speaking seriously ? for as I cannot think you would give the Colonel occasion to be continually finding fault, so neither can I suppose that he would do it without a cause."

" Oh ! no, to be sure ; He must be in the right. Why, now, I'll give you an instance : Lord Milton called yesterday morning, and told me he was going to a rehearsal at the Opera-House.— May I have the honour of attending your Ladyship there?" (continued he). O yes, (replied I;) for I should like to go, above all things. When does it begin, my Lord ? for I am ready when you are. I rose, as did also his Lordship, and so did my surly husband, (Heavens ! what a mouthful !) who said, I beg your pardon, my Lord, but I fancy Lady Clara has forgot an engagement she is under a necessity of complying with. You know, my dear, you promised to call on Mrs. Walsingham.— Ah, well, she will excuse me, for I long to hear the new opera rehearsed, and I am sure, Colonel, you will make my excuses.— I gave my hand to Lord Milton, and throwing the most good-humoured smile in the world upon my *Cara Sposa*, hurried away : but when I came home, here was Belville in such a fume and fret, you never saw the like ! Indeed Madam, (said he, the moment I entered) I cannot approve of your conduct ; it is very improper for a young married Lady to be seen with an unmarried man ; and that man too known to possess the most libertine principles. You knew I could not attend you, as I was strictly prohibited from going out. What must the World think, to see you at the Opera-House, unattended by your husband, or any female companion, and with Lord Milton too ?" Thus

" he ran on, and continued in the dumps the whole day: now was there ever any thing so churlish?"

" Good Heavens! my dear, is it for this you call " the Colonel churlish? I am sure you must have " known yourself to have been in the wrong."

" Ay, ay! I knew you would join with him.— " There's you, Hillgrove, and the Colonel, want to " drive all the men away from the house. Would to " Heaven I had never married!" Here a servant en- tered with a letter.—" Oh lud! (exclaimed she) " if here is not a letter from my cousin, Lady Laura " Beaumont."

I now rose, and took my leave. Heaven knows where her Ladyship's giddiness will end; but I am sure I tremble for her.

Adieu, my dear friend.

Yours sincerely,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

L E T T E R L X I V .

Lady Laura Beaumont to Lady Clara Belville.

SO, cousin Clara, you are married, and to a pro- digious handsome man, I hear!—I suppose you think me dead, from my not having wrote to you for some months past: thank Heaven, however, I am not, but shall soon make my appearance in the gay world, as I am now of age, and have my fortune at my own disposal; I shall therefore soon quit these gloomy walls, though very much against the inclination of my guardian. And here, my dear Clara, permit me to add, if such a proposal should not prove disagreeable, that I should be happy to live with you; though I beg I may not in the least incommod you. Pray let me know by the return of the post, if you have any objection to my request. I must own (for you know we were brought up together, when children) that I should like to live with

with you prodigiously ; but if my company is not agreeable, or your house not large enough, pray do me the favour to let your steward take a small one, as near to your Ladyship as possible.

I assure my dear Clara I shall expect her answer with impatience, therefore hope she will not delay writing to her affectionate cousin,

LAURA BEAUMONT.

LETTER LXV.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Dear Ned,

A NOT H E R strange request from my Lady ! As we sat at breakfast this morning, she addressed me with, " Colonel, I have received a letter from a friend of mine, who wishes very much to come and spend the rest of the winter with me : have you any objection ?"

" It is impossible for me to say whether I have or not, my Lady, as you have not yet told me who it is."

" Why it is a Cousin."

" Male or female, my Lady ?"

" Well, then, to put you out of your pain, 'tis Lady Laura Beaumont : you have heard of her, I dare say ?"

" My dear Lady Clara may invite any of her female friends, certainly ; I must own, however, I do not very much approve—" Here she interrupted me by saying, " Pray read her letter"—a copy of which I enclose for your perusal.

Having read, I returned it, at the same time saying, " The lady seems extremely anxious to live with you, my dear !"

" Yes, she does ; and I do not see how you can have any objection. I do assure you she is a very good girl."

In short, Ned, I assented to the request, though I do not altogether approve of it; but I would, if possible, please Lady Clara.

My sister it come to town, but spends her mornings chiefly with Lady Jemima Guzman and Lady Caroline Benson.

I received a most affectionate letter from my aunt Belville by Matilda, wherein she begs I will "take care of my *precious* health," as she is pleased to call it. And now I am on that topic, I will frankly own to you that I fear my constitution is declining. Dr. Elliott advises me to go to Bristol; but I am unwilling to propose it, as I am certain my wife would not be pleased to leave Town just now; I will therefore defer it at least till next month. All my friends appear uneasy about me except Lady Clara, who, when asked after my health, commonly answers, "He is very well." But she is so giddy, that she scarcely knows what she says: besides, I do not tell her how ill I really am. My father wishes me to throw up my commission: I cannot, however, approve of his request; as, in the present state of public affairs, the world might, perhaps, impute my resignation to dishonourable motives. If my wife, indeed, desired it, I might be tempted to comply; but I know she wishes me to continue in the army, as she has repeatedly said, that she dearly loves a red coat and cockade.

You will probably call this a very dull, stupid letter, Ned, but I am not in spirits to day, therefore shall conclude as usual, yours,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER LXVI.

Lady Clara Belville to Lady Laura Beaumont.

I Received my dear Laura's letter, the prayer of which is assented to with the greatest pleasure both by

by myself and Colonel Belville, and we expect you with impatience. I had indeed, child, began to think you never intended to visit the gay metropolis again. For Heaven's sake, what could induce your guardian to keep you so long in the country? For my part, I thought you were married to some bumpkin of a country 'quire, but am rejoiced to find you are not, as here are men enough for you to chuse out of. Indeed, my dear, I have to the full as many admirers now I am married as I had when single, and can therefore spare you at least half a dozen.—As to my Belville, he is not the man I thought him before we were married; for he is of such a jealous disposition, that he is afraid of my speaking to any other man. He has driven one away from the house already; yet he is sometimes so very good-natured, that you would think he could deny me nothing.—We have a sister of his at present with us, on a visit; a good sober sort of a body enough; but she is seldom at home, as she spends most of her time with a friend of hers, a Lady Jemima Guzman.

Having thus, child, given you a little sketch of the family you are coming into, I will conclude with hoping you will make all possible haste to

Yours sincerely,

CLARA BELVILLE.

LETTER LXVII.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

MY brother met me at Salthill, last Monday morning; but how shock'd, my dear Lucy, was I to see him! All his fine colour is fled, and he is scarcely any thing but skin and bones. I could not suppress my tears at the sight of him, though he assured me he was much better than he had been for some time, and endeavoured to appear cheerful; his efforts, however,

were

were in vain; and glad was I when we got to Hill-street; for he looked so pale, and seemed so fatigued, that I thought he would have fainted. When we got home, I tried to persuade him to lie down, but he refused.

I was very much hurt to observe Lady Clara take little or no notice of him. I am certain, Lucy, that my brother is far from being happy. How astonishing, that a woman who affected to love my brother like Lady Clara, should so soon grow indifferent to him! Upon my word she seems as unconcerned about him, as if he were an utter stranger to her; and joins in every party of pleasure, though she never offers to keep him company; for Doctor Elliot has desired he may be kept very quiet. Henry seems very composed, and never wishes her to put off any party, either at home or abroad. I cannot help thinking that he prefers another woman to Lady Clara. I think sometimes it is Lady Caroline Benson; then I check myself again, as he might as well have made her an offer as Lady Clara. I once thought of Miss Meadows (now Lady Jemima Guzman) but then, why did he not reveal his passion for her? Probably, he might suppose my father and mother would not consent to the match; neither do I suppose they would; but he might at least have tried.—Another thing: If Lady Jemima loved him (as I have reason to believe she does) she would have made herself known. In short, I cannot tell what to think; for he is so altered since last November, that none of his friends would know him. I am frightened to death through fear of losing him; as, if he was to die, I should tremble for the lives of my dear and much revered parents; and I am sure very ill could I sustain his loss. His physician advises him to go to Bristol, but he has deferred it for the present—if he is not better in a day or two, I shall certainly write to my father and mother.

Yo

You will call this, I fear, a very dull letter. It is so, indeed; my thoughts are so occupied with my brother, that I can think of nothing else. However, I will just tell you, that I have got a lover already;—a Colonel Bromley, the most conceited sop you ever saw.—The coxcomb is certainly very handsome, but so vain, that it is impossible to bear him; yet my sister-in-law says, he is the prettiest fellow she ever saw in her life.—Can my brother be happy with such a woman? “No,” I am sure my Lucy says, as does

Her affectionate friend,

MATILDA BELVILLE.

LETTER LXVIII.

Colonel Bromley to Captain Bromley.

UPON my honour, Ernest, thou art exceedingly impertinent to send thy elder brother such a letter of advice as now lies before me!—Dost thou think I am not capable of taking care of myself?—What the devil, you certainly thought you were writing to a school-boy! I have surely a right to spend my fortune as I think proper; and if I have the misfortune to ruin my estate, why a rich wife must mend it again; for I may venture to say, I believe, that few women to whom I should be inclined to make an offer, will refuse your brother Adolphus. Eh, Ernest, do you think they will?—Why at this present time, there are three pretty creatures dying for me, and one of them is married into the bargain; the second is a sister-in-law of her's, a poor blushing country thing, who is come to spend a couple of months in town; and of the third I shall say little at present, except that she is a lady of quality, with a very large fortune; but having seen her but once, I cannot determine whether I shall like her or not.

I have

I have only to repeat the advice I have often given you, my sage, prudent, sober, moralizing brother Ernest; which is, to speak to some of your friends to procure you a place in the church, as I am certain you would make an excellent parson: and remember, that I desire you will send no more of your letters of advice to me, as I shall not trouble myself to answer them; though I have no objection to hear from you when out of your sober fits.

Yours,

ADOLPHUS BROMLEY.

LETTER LXIX.

The Marquis de Guzman to Sir Charles Wilmot.

I HOPE by this time my friend is arrived safe at Hamilton-Park, and found his worthy uncle better than he expected.—You cannot think how much we miss you! As to Lady Caroline, you are such a favourite with her, that I am half inclined to be jealous. My sister likewise esteems you very much; and more from her, sweet girl, I believe, no man must ever expect, as Belville is certainly in possession of her heart.

Good Heaven! my dear Wilmot, what must those two worthy people suffer! for I am certain each loves the other. I often think it very singular, that the Colonel never publicly acknowledged his love for my sister: certainly it must have been his pride only which prevented him, as I have been told that he will have a very good estate; though it has been whispered that he has anticipated it by gaming; with what truth I cannot pretend to say. He is far from being well, and seldom appears in public. His Lady, however, does not confine herself in the least on his account, as, go to what public place you will, you are sure to meet her Ladyship with her new *cicisbeo* Colonel Bromley.

Apropos,

Apropos, Wilmot, did you ever see such a consummate puppy as that fellow? I really believe he has the vanity to fancy my sister is in love with him; for I heard him say the other day to Mowbray, "Why, "she is well enough, Sir Cecil; but there is such a languor in her eyes, whenever I chance to glance mine towards her, that let me die if I can look at her without pity."—Sir Cecil gave him a look of contempt, and turning upon his heel, walked away.—The coxcomb pretends also to make violent love to Miss Belville, who, by the bye, I fancy, despises him, and encourages him merely to draw his attention from her sister, Lady Clara, who, I think, begins to make as great a fuss with him as she did with her husband—that is, before they were married; for never poor devil was treated with more indifference than she has shewn towards him since.

Adieu!—Yours sincerely,
GUZMAN.

LETTER LXX.

Colonel Belville: to Captain Hillgrove.

Dear Ned,

AS we sat this morning at breakfast, a post-chaise stopped at the door, when Lady Clara flying to the window, exclaimed, "There's Lady Laura Beaumont!"

At that instant the lady entered the parlour, and running to my wife, cried, "My dear cousin Clara, how happy I am to see you!"

Lady Clara then presented her to me and my sister, and having resumed our seats at the breakfast table, I surveyed her Ladyship more attentively. She is very handsome, and has, I think, a pair of the most expressive blue eyes I ever saw in my life.—She seems lively, though modestly so.—As soon as breakfast was over,

over, she retired to change her dress, and being soon after followed by my sister, (who expressed herself to be much pleased with Lady Laura's person and manner) Lady Clara asked me, as soon as we were alone, how I liked her cousin? "Very well, my Lady; she seems very agreeable, and not coquettish."

"Well, but don't you think her very handsome?"

"Yes, she is a very fine woman."

The entrance of Colonel Bromley put an end to our conversation.

This Bromly is a new admirer of my wife, and her *cicisces*, wherever sh: goes; and being unable to attend her myself, I permit his officious attentions to Lady Clara to pass unnoticed, as my sister is generally of her party.

I have not forgot your kind enquiries after my health. I do not think myself worse, though my sister insists that I am, and makes herself very uneasy, in spite of all I can urge to the contrary. I told my Lady, last night, that Doctor Elliot advised me to go to Bristol; when she answered, that "Certainly, if the journey would in the least conduce to my heath, she would gladly attend me; but that the town was very agreeable at present;" whence it is too plain, Hillgrove, that she would be very unwilling to leave the pleasures of the town to accompany me in a journey for my health. I do not, thererfore, think I shall go; for by no means would I leave her in town alone, as I would sooner resign my life than lose my honour, which might prove the consequence of my leaving her.

I met your friend Sir Cecil Mowbray, a few mornings ago, in Hyde-Park, who, after enquiring in the most affectionate terms after my health, expressed his surprize and concern to see me look so poorly; and tho' I had a servant with me, insisted upon seeing me home. When we got to Hill-street, I asked him to walk in, but he refused my invitation; neither has he ever called since, though he has regularly sent a card every day requesting to know the state of my health.

I fre-

I frequently, after having conversed with my Lady, and observed her to take no notice of my *sorry* looks, have gone to the glass to see whether I looked better then than at other times: but I can perceive no difference; and have only the mortification of turning from it, to experience that even my own sex appear, at least, to be more concerned for me than is her Ladyship. Still, however, I am inclined to impute her indifference to her levity and giddiness, rather than to her want of affection for me; for cannot all the world witness her regard for me? and have I ever given her the least cause to dislike me? No:—in short, her conduct is “*passing, passing strange.*”

I forgot to tell you, that Colonel Bromley affects to pay his addresses to my sister; but he does not please her, and she only waits for a formal declaration to dismiss him.

I have called on Sir Cecil Mowbray once, and propose looking in upon him again to-day; and as I find myself much tired with writing, shall bid you adieu, and proceed to Wimpole-street.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER LXXI.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Captain Hillgrove.

SIR.

Tuesday, March 16, 1783.

WHEN you quitted town, you were so obliging as to say you should be happy to renew our acquaintance: I should not, however, have troubled you with this billet, I believe, had it not been to inform you of the very indifferent health of your friend Colonel Belville. I do not remember ever to have been more shocked in my life, than I was a few days ago, when met him in Hyde-Park: his face has undergone a te-

tal change, as well as, in short, his whole person. He yesterday called upon and chatted with me more than an hour, during which time I often observed him to exhibit symptoms of pain and restlessness; and on sending this morning to enquire after his health, his servant informed mine, that his master had been taken so ill the preceding evening, that Dr. Turton and Dr. Jebb had been sent for; that he had had a very poor night, and was pronounced to be, as it is called, *in a very bad way*. I did not chuse to visit him, for reasons which must be obvious to you, but I thought myself obliged (knowing how much you are interested in whatever concerns him) to inform you of his present dangerous situation.

I remain, Sir, your humble servant,

CECIL MOWBRAY.

P. S. I send this by an express; for since I began my letter, I have learned that he is much worse.

LETTER LXXII.

Lady Yemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

GRACIOUS Heaven, my Julia! what will become of me, or of—of—I scarcely know what I say.

Belville is dangerously ill!—dying, for aught I know.—The inhuman Lady Clara!—I cannot bear her!—His father, mother, and aunt are sent for; but is feared they will come too late.

My head is distractèd!—My brother is gone to see him.—What a cruel, cruel fate is mine, that I am prevented from attending him too!—I can add no more!

My brother is returned!—He shakes his head, and says he is very ill indeed!—Upon asking if he had seen Miss Belville, he answered, “No; for she could not leave

"leave her brother."—He saw Lady Clara, who appeared to be more frightened than shocked.—I know not what to do!—I dare not go to his house, lest I should betray myself.

Friday Morning.

CAPTAIN Hillgrove is arrived, though every one is ignorant through what channel or whose means he has been informed of his friend's danger.—He is almost distracted likewise.—The Colonel, it seems, is insensible, and knows no one.—His amiable sister is his constant attendant, for he will take nothing but from her.

Evening.

MY brother has seen Captain Hillgrove, who informed him that Sir Cecil Mowbray had sent an express to apprise him of the dangerous state in which his poor friend Belville lay. Hillgrove grasped my brother's hand, at the same time, saying, "O! my Lord, miserable man that I am, all this is my doing!"

What can he mean? Surely—But what should I say? I know not—I must leave off.—Adieu!

Sunday morning.

HEAVEN be praised, Belville is better!—Yes, my Julia, he is better; he has recovered his senses, but is still very weak and low. His father, mother, and aunt, are arrived.—But I will now tell you how I first heard of his being so dangerously ill.

I called last Thursday morning upon Lady Clara, when, on entering the drawing-room, I found her Ladyship sitting with her cousin Lady Laura Beaumont and Colonel Bromley, a pragmatical coxcomb, whom, I believe, you have not heard me mention before. Upon enquiring after the Colonel and his sister, "Why, la, my dear, (cried Lady Clara) he is very ill."

"Ill!"

"Yes;

" Yes ; he was taken last night. I sent for Dr. Turton and Dr. Jebb, who both pronounced him in " a very bad way, I think they said. And so"—What followed I know not, as I hurried away, to conceal an emotion which I was not able to suppress.

Yours,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

LETTER LXXIII.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

HOW have I been alarmed, my dear Lucy ! My brother has been at the point of death, though now, thank Heaven, he is somewhat better : — and I have made such a discovery !

I think I told you in my last letter, I thought my brother pined after some lady in secret. When he was first taken ill, I insisted on attending him : for I found Lady Clara entertained no thought of performing that duty herself. On the second day he was quite delirious, and would take nothing from any one but myself. He several times called me *Miss Meadows*, at which I was not a little surprised ; but on the second he scarcely said any thing else. He would sometimes call her *Lady Jemima*, then start and say, " Then she " is married ! " — Then again, " I had no right to " expect she would live single for me. O ! Hill- " grove ! Hillgrove ! why did you persuade me to " marry ? — But I love my wife, indeed I do."

At other times, after calling me *Miss Meadows*, he would suddenly exclaim, No, she is married ! She is " called *Lady Jemima* now." But I always observed, when his wife or any stranger entered the room, he would put his finger to his mouth, and cry, " Hush, " Edward, she is here ! "

Well may he be so unhappy ! Why did he marry Lady Clara ?

My

My father, mother, and aunt, arrived yesterday He was surprised to see them; for he had at that time quite recovered his senses. Captain Hillgrove came on Friday: Sir Cecil Mowbray was the friend who informed him of my brother's dangerous situation. The Captain is very attentive to, and scarcely ever leaves my brother, who is to go to Bristol as soon as he is capable of being removed. Doctor Elliott has long wanted him to go there, but Lady Clara opposed it; though at present she seems ready to attend him anywhere; for I believe she is alarmed at having so many people about her, considering us all as spies on her conduct.

I do not think I have yet told you of a cousin of her Ladyship who is on a visit to them. She has been here about a week, is a very fine woman, and was extremely shocked at my brother's illness. My close attendance on him has prevented me from conversing much with her; but she seems to be very agreeable.

The Marquis De Guzman calls every day to enquire after Henry's health: his sister also has been here twice since he has grown better. I do not know what to make of my brother's passion for her Ladyship. It is amazing he should be in such a hurry to marry Lady Clara, when his affections were fixed on Lady Jemima. I suppose he thought my father would not consent to the match; and as he could have no suspicion of the real character of Lady Jemima, then Miss Meadows, I suppose this determined him to marry Lady Clara. I should be much pleased to know if Lady Jemima loves him; though I do not suspect that to be the case, as she has never taken the least pains to throw herself in his way; on the contrary, she seems rather studiously to avoid him; for she even excused herself, as you will probably recollect, from being of the party at my father's last Christmas.

I have not mentioned a word of this discovery to any one; no, not even to my mother. Captain Hillgrove, I make

I make no doubt, knows the whole, as he is, I believe, privy to Harry's most secret thoughts; but I cannot mention it to him, from motives of delicacy.

I think you desired me to send you a description of Colonel Bromley, as you say you think you know him; I will therefore endeavour to give you his portrait, though I almost abhor his name.

He is tall and thin; of a dark complexion, though very clear; black eyes; nose rather inclined to the Roman; a good mouth, with exceeding fine teeth. I do not know whether you will be able to form any idea of his person from this outline, which perhaps, has not altogether done him justice, as he is certainly very handsome; but then he is so excessively vain and cox-comical, that there is no enduring him: besides, his behaviour to my sister is intolerable, as indeed is her's to him.—But my brother enquires for me, I must therefore conclude in haste, yours,

M. BELVILLE.

LETTER LXXIV.

Lady Laura Beaumont to Miss Granville.

Dear Susan,

Hill-street.

I Arrived here last Monday, and was received by Lady Clara just as I could wish. Her husband was waiting with her to welcome me to Town, and I really believe I shall never more recover my heart. You desired to know, if report had not flattered him? Lord, child! it has not half done him justice; but my perverse stars ordered it so, that the very day after, he was seized with a violent disorder, which has nearly cost him his life; nay, he is far from being out of danger yet. The sister whom Clara mentioned in her letter is here upon a visit, and has carefully nursed him the whole time. On the third day after he was attacked by his complaint, Captain Hillglove, a most intimate friend

friend of the Colonel, came post to Town ; and yesterday arrived his father and mother, with a maiden aunt, who is doatingly fond of him ; so that I find myself just now in a most uncomfortable situation.

And now for my opinion of Lady Clara.—That she once loved Belville, I have not the least doubt ; for no one can do otherwise ; but at present she seems totally indifferent to him. There is a young fop visits here, who is a great favourite with her ; and if I should find myself far gone in a hopeless passion, (for hopeless it must prove, unless I can procure a separation between Belville and his lady) why, I fancy I shall find no great difficulty in persuading her to give her husband an opportunity of suing for a divorce.

Now, my dear, the scheme I have in agitation is this : When he recovers (as Heaven forbid he should not !) I propose to make myself as agreeable to him as possible ; and if I find my aim in the least accomplished, the next step shall be, to make him jealous. After this, my third manœuvre must be (under the mask of friendship, take notice) to persuade my cousin that her husband slighted her ; at that moment throw the man I think she prefers in her way ; and then who knows what consequences may follow ? She may lose her husband, while I may get the man I love.

Such is the plan I have adopted, and propose to carry into execution as soon as my charming Belville is recovered, and has got rid of the Tribe he has at present about him. His physician talks of sending him to Bristol, as soon as he is able to undergo the fatigue of the journey. I am very much afraid that his father, mother, and sister will accompany him ; for as the aunt cannot bear his lady, I am sure she will not be of the party. As to the *friend* whom I mentioned in my last letter, were it not for his having a remarkable manly face, I should positively think him to be a woman in man's cloaths, as since his arrival he has scarcely ever left Belville's chamber. My cousin Clara cannot

cannot endure him ; but as he is such a monstrous favourite with her husband, I propose to make all the interest I can for his good word and opinion.

As to diversions or company, I have hitherto seen none ; for though Lady Clara attends so little to the Colonel, yet she cannot with any propriety either pay or receive visits : all the fashionable folks, therefore, I have yet seen, are a Lady Jemima Guzman, her brother, Lady Caroline Benson, and Colonel Bromley, the sop beforementioned. Lady Jemima is very handsome, and a great favourite with my cousin Clara ; though Heaven only knows the *why* or the *wherefore* ; for they are as different from each other in manners, sentiments, and every thing else, as it is possible for two women to be ; Lady Jemima appearing to be remarkably sedate and sensible. Captain Hillgrove left his patient while her Ladyship sat with us, but as soon as she rose to go away, he rose also and quitted the room with her. The Marquis, her brother, is very handsome, but is engaged, I hear, to Lady Caroline Benson.

Thus have I given you an account of all the company I have yet seen. Bromley pretends to place all his visits to the score of Miss Belville, though I am certain they are intended only to Lady Clara.

I was interrupted ; for Lady Clara coming in, and I happening to speak of Lady Jemima Guzman, she gave me her history ; but as this letter is long enough already, I shall defer relating it till my next.

Adieu, my dear Susan ! Let me hear from you soon, and believe me ever

Yours affectionately,

LAURA BEAUMONT.

LETTER

LETTER LXXV.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

Hill-street.

THOUGH I have been in Town above a week, this is the first moment I have had to spare from my friend Henry. Good Heaven! Burton, what a melancholy as well as dangerous situation did I find him in! He is now greatly mended, and this morning, for the first time this fortnight, left his bed. As soon as he is able, he will set out for Bristol, the only remedy his Physician tells me he can prescribe for him. Lady Clara accompanies him; but Mr. and Mrs. Belville, with Miss, are obliged to go immediately to the seat of Sir Thomas, who is so dangerously ill, that they do not expect him to live many days.

A Lady Laura Beaumont is on a visit to Lady Clara. She is very handsome, but I do not much like her, though I cannot assign any particular reason why. As to Lady Clara, she is quite in the vapours, as she can neither receive nor pay visits with any propriety during her husband's confinement to a sick chamber.

I have not seen Bromley for several days. I am told he is gone into the country, and I rejoice at the circumstance.

Henry wishes me to accompany him to Bristol; but I fear it will not be in my power, as I expect to be ordered to join my regiment every day.

Now for a word or two concerning Lady Jemima. She was here yesterday to enquire after Belville's health; and Lady Clara not being at home, she desired to speak with me, when I immediately went down to her: she blushed on my entrance, and said, "I should not have troubled you, Sir, but my brother not being very well, requested me to call on Lady Clara, to know how the Colonel did: however, as she is not at home"—

Here I interrupted her—for I was angry, yet pleased at her delicacy, in trying to conceal her own concern for him—Taking her hand, therefore, I said,
 “Would not my dear Lady Jemima’s good-nature
 “prompt her to enquire after my friend but through
 “the intercession of the Marquis? Be it, however,
 “from what motive it may, (continued I, smiling) I
 “have the pleasure to inform her that he is greatly
 “recovered.” *

You may be sure my speech heightened her confusion; but before she had time to reply, Lady Laura and Lady Clara entered, when Lady Jemima took leave. Oh Burton, if Henry had but waited a little longer, how happy he might have been! But it was not to be.

Adieu! yours, &c. &c.

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER LXXVI.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

My dear Lucy,

Rose-Hill Farm.

WE arrived about twelve yesterday morning at this place, the seat of my uncle Sir Thomas Belville, who is very ill indeed, and was not rendered better by hearing of the ill state of my poor brother’s health, of whom he was always doatingly fond. This morning he told my father that he would find the family estate the same as when the late Sir Thomas died, but that he had always designed his farm, which he purchased about ten years ago, for his nephew: as to his personal fortune, he said he should divide it between his sister and myself.

This is a delightful spot, and was always a favourite of my brother’s. My uncle has been improving it ever since he has had it; for you must know, that immediately on his purchasing this estate, he insisted on my

my father's taking possession of the Hall, which he had no claim to during my uncle's life, as my grandfather left my father, who was then very young, entirely in his power. How few would have acted so generously ! But I have often heard my father say, that his brother had ever treated him with a parental as well as filial affection, and that he had never had the least reason to repine at his father's will.

I do not find myself, my dear, in a humour to begin any other subject ; for the thought of my brother's uncertain recovery, joined to the melancholy expectation of every moment hearing that my uncle is no more, makes me totally unfit for every thing.

Adieu, my dear Lucy, and believe me your sincere friend,

M. BELVILLE.

LETTER LXXVII.

Captain Bromley to Colonel Bromley.

London.

I Arrived here yesterday, and was not a little surprised to learn that you were gone to Bristol. For Heaven's sake, brother, what can be the reason of your late absurd conduct ? Why do you thus fly from all your friends ? What could induce you to run to Bristol at this time when you knew your uncle Bromley (to say nothing of myself; for a younger brother, you know, is of no consequence) was coming to Town. He is very much displeased, and thinks your behaviour equally uncivil and unkind. Indeed, if I am to believe what report says, you are only gone thither to be in readiness to receive Lady Clara Belville ; at least this report is current about town. Nay, the World do not scruple to say, that you have already had a *tête-à-tête*, or an *affair*, as it is called, with her Ladyship ; but I cannot think you so lost to every sense of

honour, as to seduce another man's wife. Suppose her Ladyship inclined to indulge herself in criminal pleasures, do not you be the man to render her the disgrace of her sex and family. Besides, a man so truly deserving of esteem and respect as I have heard Colonel Belville is, should prove a bar to your unlawful passion; for what mortal enmity must he bear you for having rendered the woman he chose for his wife infamous! to say nothing of the disgrace it would bring on yourself. You know your uncle's principles to be so rigid in this respect, that he would scarcely ever forgive an imprudence of this kind, and it cannot long be kept a secret from him; for I hardly go into a Coffee-house where I do not hear your name and Lady Clara's mentioned together, or take up a news-paper, where I do not find some paragraph alluding to you.

Reflect then, I conjure you, my dear Adolphus, on the probable consequences that may ensue from your prosecution of this infamous amour. Your uncle's favour will be forfeited; your life endangered; or perhaps you may have the life of the man whose honour you have already injured to answer for. I am sensible that love for the lady is entirely out of the question, as you cannot approve the woman who is ready to throw herself into the arms of the first man she meets; let me therefore persuade you to give up all thoughts of her, and immediately, on the receipt of this, to set off for Town.

Do not throw this away before you have half perused it, but be assured that I am

Your very sincere friend,
and affectionate brother,

ERNEST BROMLEY.

LETTER

LETTER LXXVIII.

Colonel Bromley to Captain Bromley.

Bristol.

HA! ha! ha! I cannot forbear laughing at the ridiculous epistle now lying before me! Why, man, do you think me such a ninny, as to imagine you can be sorry at my losing my uncle's favour? If I do that, I shall give you an opportunity of slipping into the old Don's good graces; and consequently of slipping into his estate. As to what the World says at my being here in order to receive Lady Clara, it is certainly very true; and as to my uncle's knowing of it, I am perfectly at ease on that score. A tilting-haut I cannot possibly avoid, if things happen as I wish. If I am conquered, why there's an end of all my faults; and if I conquer, why there's an end of the *amiable Belville*.

Thus, you see, Ernest, I have read your letter with strict attention, instead of throwing it away before I had half perused it, as you so wisely prognosticated; but remember, I don't promise to do the same by every epistolary sermon you may send to

Yours, &c. &c.

ADOLPHUS BROMLEY.

LETTER LXXIX.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

My dear Julia,

THREE times have I taken up my pen, and as often laid it down again.—Why am I denied the power of getting the better of my—my—what shall I call it? must I say love—for a man who never can be mine? Lady Caroline, as well as you, who know every secret of my heart, persuade me to marry; but

I cannot bring myself to act a part so ungenerous. If Belville was happy, I would try to make myself content: but he is not; and the world dont scruple to say that his lady is tired of him; nay, her whole conduct proves it. Bromley, it is said, is gone to Bristol. Does not this wear the look of an appointment? Too surely it does; for what other inducement could he have to go thither just at this time?—Poor Belville! how I pity him! for he is distressed on every side; his uncle Sir Thomas laying at the point of death, his wife's honour suspected, and his own health so precarious, that—But I am interrupted.—

IN CONTINUATION.

O! Julia! Julia! what a trial have I gone through! Belville has been here to take his leave of me—perhaps for ever. O! dreadful thought! I cannot support it. I must lay down my pen—

I will now endeavour to give you an account of our interview.

On entering the parlour I was surprised to find Colonel Belville with Captain Hillgrove. I started at the sight of them, and scarcely knowing what I did, advanced to the Colonel, at the same time crying, “Heavens, “Colonel Belville, why have you ventured abroad? “Pray keep your seat;” for he had half risen from it, though unable to stand.

Taking my hand, and after three times opening his lips, and as often closing them again, he said, “I am “come, Lady Jemima, to take my leave of you. “Forgive me if it is too great a liberty—but perhaps “it is for the last time.”

“Heaven forbid! (cried I) do not talk so.”

“Does Lady Jemima (returned he with haste)—“does she wish me to live?”

“Good Heaven, why should I wish your death? “Whence could spring so horrid an idea?”

“I know

" I know your ladyship is all goodness, otherwise I
" should not have taken this liberty ; but the desire I
" had of knowing whether you really had an aversion
" to me, prompted me to be thus troublesome."

" Why should I conceive an aversion to a gentle-
" man who never offended me ? for, to my knowledge
" Colonel Belville never has."

" Generous woman ! then you don't hate me. Af-
" sure me but of that, and I will be contented."

" On the contrary, Sir, be assured that I esteem—"

Here I stopped, scarcely knowing what I said ; when
" the Colonel seizing both my hands, and pressing
them to his lips, exclaimed, " Angelic creature !"—
then letting them go, and turning to Hillgrove " O !
" Edward ! what have I lost !?"—then again to me,
" Adieu, Madam ! perhaps—but I see I distress you :"
and bowing, left the room.

I stood rooted to the spot for some moments, till a
shower of tears coming to my relief, I returned to my
own apartment.

Do not condemn me, Julia, for what I said to Bel-
ville : I hope it will not render me despicable in his
eyes. Certain it is, I ought never to see him more ;
nor shall I at least for some months, as Lord George,
my brother, Lady Caroline, and myself, set off in a
few days for the country. Mr. Mordaunt has promised
to accompany us ; for he is a great favourite with us
all. He too, poor gentleman, has his troubles ; but I
am not now in a condition to give my dear friend his
little history, though I propose to do it the first op-
portunity.

Adieu, my Julia ! I can add no more, than that I
am always yours sincerely,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

Lady Clara Belville called just now to take her leave,
but I was denied ; for after what has passed, how could
I see her ? They set off for Bristol to-morrow morning.

LETTER LXXX.

From the Same to the Same.

MY brother has prevailed on Lady Caroline to become his *Cara Sposa* before we set off for Moulton Park. Thursday week is the day fixed for the wedding, and we all join in soliciting Mr. Thornton to permit his Julia to be present at the ceremony. I am sure your good Papa will not hesitate to comply with our request.

I was interrupted by Sir Cecil Mowbray, who came once more to offer himself, but I was inflexible; and the obstinate man, in spite of all my brother can say, refuses to be present at his wedding. Pray, my dear, come immediately to Town on the receipt of this, as I long to present my brother and you to each other.

Yours,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

LETTER LXXXI.

*Miss Thornton to Mr. Thornton.**My dear Father,**London.*

IARRIVED here yesterday evening, and was received with open arms by Lady Jemima, who presented me to her uncle and brother.

Lord George is a very noble figure, and has a most sensible, but affable, good-natured countenance. The Marquis is excessively handsome, and not unlike his sweet sister. With Lady Caroline my dear father is intimately acquainted.

You desired me to be particular in telling you how Lady Jemima looked. I can't say very well, as she is much thinner and paler than she was when at The Wood. She affects to be lively, though I much fear all her cheerfulness is forced.

Colonel!

Colonel Belville and Lady Clara are set off for Bristol, so that I have not had the pleasure of seeing them. Mr. Mordaunt I like prodigiously, though I can perceive that he is not happy. Next Thursday is the wedding-day ; and the day after the whole family set off for Moulton Park, soon after which my dear father will again see at the Wood

His ever dutiful
And affectionate daughter,
J. THORNTON.

LETTER LXXXII.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

IT is as I feared ; I am ordered to set off for Southamton to-morrow. I have no time to write particulars, but Belville has seen and taken leave of Lady Jemima Guzman. He is much better, and, with his lady and Lady Laura Beaumont, is to set off for Bristol on Thursday next, from whence I hope to hear soon of his perfect recovery. Sir Cecil Mowbray assures me, Bromley is already there. I hope, however, that he is misinformed.

I took the liberty this morning of hinting in the most respectful, gentle terms at the imprudence of her Ladyship's behaviour towards Bromley ; when she affected to be very much offended, and told me, that " no person except the Colonel had a right to take her to task, or to censure her conduct. As to what the World said, she cared very little about it, as she had been long used to be slandered by it." With this speech she flounced out of the room, and scarcely spoke ten words the rest of the day. Thus you see there is no reclaiming this silly, giddy woman.

Belville is just returned from an airing in Hyde-Park, where he met the Marquis de Guzman, who told him, that he, with his uncle, sister, and Lady Caroline

Benson, intended going into the country in a few days, where they proposed to reside during the remainder of the year. Upon Henry's asking him when he was to be enrolled in the corps of *Benedict*s, the Marquis replied, "The day was not yet absolutely fixed upon, but that he hoped and believed it would take place before they left Town." Poor Henry congratulated him on his approaching happiness, though he half suppressed a sigh.

Adieu, Burton ! for I must now prepare for my journey.

Yours, &c. &c.

EDWARD HILLGROVE,

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lady Laura Beaumont to Miss Glenville.

Dear Susan,

Bristol Hot-Wells.

WE arrived here yesterday noon. Poor Belville, though we have been nearly a week on the road, was very much fatigued. Lady Clara was quite in the vapours ; while I, for my part, did every thing in my power to amuse the Colonel, and had the pleasure to perceive I did not entirely fail in the attempt.—I am called to breakfast. Adieu !

Three o'clock.

THE plot begins to thicken. This morning, as we sat at breakfast, Bromley was announced. Lady Clara coloured ; Belville turned pale ; while I stared astonishment. On Bromley's entrance he bowed, and advancing to Lady Clara, "Dear Madam, I hope I see you well. How rejoiced I was to hear of your arrival here !—I hope, Sir (turning to the Colonel), you find yourself better."

Belville replied in a very cool manner, that he was something

something mended: "But pray, Sir (continued he),
" what has brought you to Bristol? Not ill health,
" I hope."

"That it certainly is not (exclaimed my cousin);
" for I think I never saw Colonel Bromley look
" better."

"Your Ladyship is pleased to flatter me. No, it
" certainly is not ill health, but pleasure solely which
" has brought me hither."

"I thought there was very little *pleasure* to be met
" with here at present," replied Belville, sneeringly."

Why, that's very true, Sir; but the agreeable com-
pany of this lady will compensate for the want of any
" other.—Has your Ladyship been to the Rooms
yet?"

"No; we only arrived yesterday."

"Will you give me leave to attend you to them
" this morning?"

"With all my heart.—Colonel, Lady Laura,
you'll go?"

"If you do, I certainly shall," returned Belville.

We accordingly sallied forth; but Belville was too weak to walk so fast as they did, and I chose to accompany him, though he was a very silent companion. At last, however, thinking the present a favourable opportunity for commencing my manœuvres, I said, "Pray, Sir, did you know of Colonel Bromley being at Bristol?"

"I did not, Madam, believe it, though it was hinted to me that he was here."

"He is a most contemptible coxcomb, in my opinion; and I believe, Sir, your sister's sentiments of him do not differ very widely from mine."

"They do not, Madam; and I, in consequence, at her request, gave him his dismission; but still he continues his visits, thought she is not with us."

"The

" The Colonel's visits would seem, in my opinion,
" Sir, to be chiefly directed to your lady."

" I don't know what to say to that ; but I cannot,
" indeed I do not, approve of them."

" Why do you not forbid him your house, then ?"

" Because the person whom I most wish to please
" and oblige, opposes it."

" Why, to be sure, I do think the Colonel is a very
" great favourite, and I am not a little surprised at it."

By this time we had reached the Rooms, where Belville sat down quite fatigued. I seated myself by him, though he begged I would not confine myself; but I chose to stay with him. As to Bromley and Lady Clara, they walked, chatted, and laughed with the greatest ease and good-humour imaginable. At last Belville, seemingly quite exhausted of all patience, arose, and walking up to my Lady, asked if she was not ready to leave the Rooms?

" With all my heart.—You will dine with us, Colonel ?" turning to Bromley, who returned an assenting bow.

As soon as we reached home, Belville retired to his own apartment, when my cousin said, " Only think,
" Lady Laura, that Bromley should be here !"

" It is a little strange, indeed, my Lady ! Did you
" not know of it ?"

" Me ! O lud, no ! how should I know what he
" intended to do ?"

" Nay, I am sure I don't know how you should :
" but I am sorry to tell you, cousin Clara, that your
" husband does not approve of the Colonel's visits."

" Psha ! one can't always do what one's husband
" likes. If I was to dismiss all the people he dislikes,
" I should not have one pretty fellow sit down to my
" card-tables."

" Well, my dear, but you should consider, that
" your husband has a right to—"

" Lord, you talk just like Lady Jemima Guzman !
" in YOUR opinions, after being married, a woman is

" never

" never to be seen in a man's company without her
" husband. Out upon you both ! I hope you will
" both die old maids ; for I am sure you would spoil
" all the men, were you to be married."

This ended our conversation, and we retired to dress.

I flatter myself that the Colonel has no aversion to me, as he often asks me to sing and play, admires my work, drawing, &c. for you must know I affect to be very notable, and practise every art in my power to render myself agreeable to him. Had he an amiable, deserving wife, I would struggle with my passion, fly from my danger, and endeavour to forget him : but as I think Lady Clara will soon furnish him with ample proofs to justify a legal separation, I cannot persuade myself to consider it any crime to try to make him esteem, if not love me ; and esteem from him would be preferable to love from any other man.

I am summoned to dinner, and consequently must abruptly conclude with

Your sincere friend,
LAURA BEAUMONT.

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

My dear friend,

Bristol Hat-Wells.

I Received yours on Friday last ; and to your kind enquiries after my health, can scarcely return you any answer. That I am better, is certain ; but how long I shall continue so, is equally uncertain.

What do you think, Ned ? Bromley is here. I assure you, however, that I shall very soon so far exert my authority as to forbid the coxcomb my house.

Well, this is downright intolerable !—Lady Laura Beaumont has just tapped at the door, to inform me that—But I will give you our conversation.

“ I beg

" I beg your pardon, Sir; I did not know you was
" engaged at your writing-table."

" Pray, Madam (replied I, gaily, for I was rather
" in spirits) walk in, Lady Laura's company must
" certainly be preferable to writing to my friend—tho'
" that friend is no other than Captain Hillgrove."—
" In saying this, I took her hand, and led her to a
" seat.

" Have you seen your lady since breakfast, Sir?"

" No, Madam, I have not."

" Will you give me leave, Sir, to find some little
" fault with your conduct?"

" Certainly, my Lady—wherever you see cause."

" Well, then, I think you are rather too remiss
" and indifferent—or shall I say *indulgent*—to Lady
" Clara.—To be serious: Colonel Belville, in my
" opinion, you should be more attentive to my cousin's
" parties, both at home and abroad."

" Good Heavens! (exclaimed I, hurt at this re-
" proof) what can I do? My health will not permit
" me to attend Lady Clara in all her diversions."

" But why not insist then, on her confining herself
" more at home?"

" Surely, Lady Lura, you would not wish me to
" lead her about like a child! I should imagine that
" you, my Lady, knew the disposition of your cousin
" better than to believe she would tamely submit to such
" treatment. Besides, in my opinion, such behavi-
" our on my part would only prove the means of ren-
" dering her more refractory."

" What you say, Sir, is equally sensible and just;
" and indeed, from the character I have ever heard
" of Colonel Belville, I expected no other reply; but
" it may not *now*, perhaps, be either improper or un-
" necessary in me, Sir, to inform you that Colonel
" Bromley has taken a lodging in this house; and I am
" sorry to add, that I fear he was partly induced to
" take this imprudent step at the request of my
" cousin."

" How,

" How, Madam, at the request of your cousin !
" Pray, explain."

" The Colonel, Sir, was complaining of the many
" inconveniences he experienced in the lodgings he
" then occupied, when Lady Clara stopped him by
" observing, that there was plenty of room in this
" house ; and as it was reckoned the best in the place,
" she wondered he did not remove here : on which
" the Colonel immediately hired an apartment in
" it."

I leave you to judge of my feelings, Hillgrove, on receiving this information ; and which, indeed, were so poignant, that, to prevent Lady Laura from perceiving my distress, I instantly quitted the room.—O Ned ! how greatly do I now stand in need of your advice !

'Sdeath, I will not bear it !—I will instantly, with my family quit this place for London, be the consequence what it may.—No ; I'll not tamely submit to be an object for the " Slow moving finger of Scorn to " point at ;" but will this moment go and inform her of my intention.

IN CONTINUATION.

ON entering Lady Clara's dressing-room, I found her writing.—" Your Ladyship is busy," said I, gravely.

" O yes ! for I am writing to my dear Lady Je-
" mima."

Aye thought I, and I believe sighed, " I wish you
" would copy her."

" Do you wish me to say any thing to her for you
" (continued she) La !—why you look as serious as
" —Merciful ! gracious ! what's the matter ?—Why,
" surely you—However, before I hear any dismal
" stories, let me finish my letter."

I sat very patiently till she had concluded, when, turning herself half round as she was sealing it, she said, " Well, now I am ready to hear a lecture."

" Why, should you think so, my dear Lady
" Clara?"

" O, I am sure of it, by the long dismal face you
" make."

" Then you are mistaken, indeed! I only intruded
" upon to inform you, that finding myself much bet-
" ter, I should be glad to return immediately to town,
" as urgent business requires my presence there imme-
" diately."

" Indeed, Colonel Belville!—Is it possible?—Re-
" turn to town immediately!—Why, we shall find
" nobody there at this time of the year."

" Very true, my Lady; but I shall not be detained
" there longer than a week, and then I propose to pay
" a visit to my uncle."

" Good Heavens! pay a visit to your uncle, indeed!
" (returned she, laughing) Why, to be sure, he will
" be either dead or quite well by that time."

" Madam! Madam! (replied I, sharply, shocked
" at her unfeeling observation) Heaven forbid he
" should be no more!—Remember, however, I ex-
" pect, Madam, that you will be ready to accompany
" me on Thursday morning."

" Very well, Sir! it is indifferent to me where I
" go."—Then humming an Italian air, she turned
to the window.

Hence you see, Ned, that your next letter must be
addressed to me in London.

Yours,
HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXV.

Lady Clara Belville to Lady Jemima Guzman.

My dear Jemima,

THREE weeks have I been here, and yet not a single letter from your Ladyship!—Very pretty, indeed!—I suppose you have found so much amusement among your *Country Beaus*, that you have totally forgot your *Town Friends*.

So much by way of reproof.

I am quite sick of this place; for there is no company, and consequently no scandal.

I really believe I must invent a story myself, or I shall die of the spleen. Here sits my *husband* in the pouts six days out of the seven; though Heaven knows for what! Then there's my *fine cousin* pretends to put up her lip, and find fault with my conduct!—“What a terrible life do I lead!”

But hark!—Here comes my *Caro Sposo*, with a face as long as my arm! Now shall I hear a lecture an hour long!—But I will conclude my letter before I hear a word.

Adieu, therefore, my dear Lady Jemima; and be me ever yours,

CLARA BELVILLE.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

London.

THE town is quite empty, and yet your friend Mowbray is still here!

Why, 'faith, Maynard, to tell you the truth, I have no where to go; at least, where I should like to go. 'Tis true, my uncle, Lord Barton of the North

Lord

(Lord help the old soul !) would be very glad of my company ; but then I should be consumed with the vapours, were I to go : I have therefore been under the necessity of telling him, that having unluckily promised to pay a visit to my Lord——(fill up the dash with any name you please, for both are equally *true*) I could not do myself the honour at present of accepting his invitation. For you must know, Maynard, that when this good old man dies, I stand a fair chance of succeeding to his estate. His *title* he cannot rob me of ; though he might deprive me of the estate, by taking it into his head to marry some fresh-coloured country girl, by way of comforting him ; and then, the devil take the title without it, I say.——But I have no doubt at present of being a great favourite with him ; and he cannot, surely, live many years longer, as he is now upwards of seventy-two.

Belville, with Lady Clara, have been gone to Bristol more than three weeks ; and I am told (though with what truth I can't pretend to say) Bromley was ready there to receive *her*. His uncle and brother are both in Town ; but as I have a very slight acquaintance with either, I can extract no intelligence from them.

Lady Jemima, with her uncle and the new married pair, (her brother, the Marquis, is just married to Lady Caroline Benson), set off about a week ago, for a seat of their uncle's near Richmond, in Yorkshire, called Molton-Park ; where they propose to reside some months.

Before they quitted London, I once more presumed to make a tender of my services to Lady Jemima, and again had the mortification of being refused ; though in such polite and gentle terms as to disarm all resentment, as well as preclude me from every species of complaint.

To sooth my woes, as well as recompose my features, I instantly after quitting Lady Jemima, ordered my post-chaise to drive to the seat of my friend George Westley,

Westley, though I had been previously invited, in the most friendly manner, by the Marquis her brother, to be present at his wedding with Lady Caroline Benson.

I continued a fortnight at Westley's; when, on coming to town, and calling in Berkley-square, I was told that the family had set off the day before for Yorkshire.

I now propose to pay a visit to Sir Thomas Glendore, to whose hospitable mansion, therefore, your letters must in future be addressed;—but what will become of me afterwards, Heaven only knows!

Yours, as usual,

C. MOWBRAY.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Miss Margaret Belville to Colonel Belville.

My dear Nephew,

Rose-Hill Farm.

PAINFUL as the task is, I am the on'y person at present capable of acquainting you of the dreadful loss we have all sustained by the death of your uncle Sir Thomas. Sensible as I am of your present precarious state of health, I have most fervently implored the Almighty Providence, that you may not be too much shocked by this disagreeable news, but that you may remember it is the duty of us poor mortals always to submit to and obey his will.

If you are able my dear Henry, to undertake so long a journey, your father would rejoice to see you at Rose-Hill as soon possible, as he wishes you to be present at the opening of your uncle's will. If, however, the fatigue may be thought too great for you, we all entreat you not to attempt it.

Sir

Sir James, Lady Belville, and your sister desire their love, and fervent wishes for your safety and better health; for which, likewise, my dear Harry, most ardently prays

Your affectionate aunt,
M. BELVILLE.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Lady Laura Beaumont to Miss Glenville.

Dear Susan,

Bristol Hot-Wells.

THIS day at dinner the Colonel informed me, that he proposed to remove his family to London to-morrow morning: my answer was, that I would be ready.

Lady Clara appeared very full of all dinner-time, during which Belville and myself in vain tried to draw her into conversation. As soon as the water-glasses were removed, she arose from table and left the room. She, however, made her appearance again while we were at tea, during which a footman delivered a letter to the Colonel; at the same time telling him, that it was brought express by one of his father's servants. Belville hastily ran over the contents, at which he turned pale, and then, giving the letter to his lady, left the room. Lady Clara having perused it, said, "So, Sir Thomas is dead! Now I suppose we shall be"—Belville's re-entrance prevented her saying more.

"You have read the letter, Lady Clara?"

"Yes. What do you propose doing, Colonel?"

"To go to my father immediately."

"What, to-night? Surely you cannot mean it!"

"No, my dear; but as early in the morning as possible, if you please.—You, Lady Laura (turning to me), I am afraid, will be quite tired with hurrying in this manner from place to place; but I trust we shall be more settled during the remainder of the summer."

We

We retired to our apartments early ; but I did not chuse to go to bed at all, as we are to set off at four to-morrow, or rather this morning ; for the clock has struck one. As soon as we arrive at Rose-Hill Farm, I shall write again.

I have not seen Bromley these two days : whether my Lady has or not, I cannot pretend to say.

Adieu, my dear Susan ! for I believe, notwithstanding what I have said before, I shall endeavour to take an hour or two's rest.

Yours sincerely,
L. BEAUMONT.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

Molton Park.

I SHOULD have written to my dear Julia before this time, had I not caught a dreadful cold on my journey to this place (where we arrived safely, if not well, last Tuesday se'nnight), which has confined me to my room ever since : as it is now, however, something better, I will endeavour to perform the promise I made her at parting, by giving her some account of this sweet spot.

The house, which stands rather on a rising-ground, is very spacious, and built of stone. From the principal apartments in front, you have a beautiful and extensive prospect of a most romantic country ; and from the back-front, a pleasing view of the sea. The park is large, and well stocked with deer : the gardens are extensive, and laid out with equal elegance and taste : in short, Molton Park is a most delightful situation, and possesses, besides, the additional charm of a very genteel neighbourhood ; though, owing to my indisposition, I have not yet seen any company.

My uncle was received with every testimony of respect and affection by all the tenants ; for as he had occasionally

occasionally visited the late Lord Molton, the whole country were acquainted with his person and his virtues. I believe I have formerly mentioned, that one of my uncle's godfathers had bequeathed him a very considerable fortune. This godfather was Lord Molton, who by his will demised this mansion-house and estate to Lord George; for having purchased the latter, as well as built the former himself, his Lordship was at liberty to leave it to whomsoever he pleased, though the family-estate naturally descended to one of his nephews.

In a month's time we expect an overflow of company; but I do assure you, that I look forward to that time with regret, as our little party is so very agreeable, that I am selfish enough to wish it might not be interrupted.

My brother and sister appear to live but for each other. Lord George and the good Mr. Mordaunt usually spend their mornings in riding or walking; and the Marquis, Marchioness, and myself, generally attend them in their excursions.

I inclose Mr. Mordaunt's little history for my Julia's entertainment, by his own permission; for so great a favourite are you with him, that he says he can deny you nothing. I think, my dear, you and he must make a match. Hey, Julia! will you leave the volatile Sir Cecil, and take up with *The Silent Man?*

Heigh ho! I wonder whether Belville has been able to visit his uncle.—I am surprised that I have not heard from her Ladyship, as she promised to correspond with me.—But I am called to dinner, and must therefore bid you adieu for the present.

Evening.

I Have just received a letter from Lady Clara, who chides me for not writing; and will therefore answer her epistle directly.—She speaks very slightly of Belville.

I have

I have nothing farther to add, except to request that you will return the enclosed, as soon as you have perused it, to

Yours affectionately,
J. GUZMAN.

H I S T O R Y
O F

MR. MORDAUNT.

"**M**Y father, who was an only son, at the age of twenty-one found himself his own master, (as about that period he unfortunately lost both father and mother) and in the possession of an ample estate, with no incumbrance whatever. In two years after the death of his parents, he married a lady, whose amiable temper and acquired accomplishments did honour to his choice, and who, at the end of the second year, made him happy in the birth of a son. In the following year I also made my appearance; and as our parents rigidly dispensed their favours equally between us, we were brought up to entertain an unfeigned as well as unreserved esteem and affection for each other: indeed, I believe I may venture to assert, that from the time of our birth till death cruelly separated us, not one single spark of jealousy ever existed in either of our breasts.

" My brother possessing a more lively disposition than myself, was consequently a more general favourite with the fair sex; and in addition to an handsome person, with an elegant easy address, he bore such a character for good sense and sobriety of manners, that he never failed of being well received in all companies.

" At

" At the age of nineteen we quitted our studies at Oxford ; and being soon after admitted as students of the Inner Temple, entered into all the gaieties of life with which London abounds, though we carefully shunned the fashionable vices of it.

" Two years had passed on, during which we spent our time in a round of innocent pleasures and amusements, when, one evening, my brother asked me to accompany him to Ranelagh. We entered the Gardens a few minutes before the fire-works commenced. As all the company appeared to be crowding to the spot where they were to be exhibited, my brother and I determined to remain at some distance, when a sudden cry of Fire ! made us press forward, and we beheld a young lady surrounded with flames. Frederick, with a presence of mind quick as thought, instantly pulled off his coat, and wrapping it round the fair distressed object, extinguished the flames in a minute; though not soon enough to prevent the lady's fainting. An elderly lady, who accompanied her, and whom we afterwards discovered to be her mother, was nearly reduced to the same condition on seeing the dreadful situation of her beloved child, who, however, by the help of some of the surrounding ladies' salts, and the attention of my brother, at length began to recover; and, lifting up her fine blue eyes, while a faint blush over-spread her beauteous face, was beginning to return him thanks, when, perceiving the crowd who stood gazing on her, she stopped, and turning to her mother, begged they might go home. This being instantly assented to, we attended them out of the Gardens, and put them into their carriage, when Frederick requested permission to wait on them next morning; to which they bowed assent; and having learned their address from the servant, we took our leave.

" On our return to our chambers, I perceived my brother to be extremely thoughtful as well as absent; and that when he spoke, it was only in praise of Miss

Maitland

Maitland (the name of the lady) or her mother. A secret alarm now took possession of my breast, lest this accident might prove the means of engaging him in a hopeless passion for Miss Maitland full well knowing, though her birth and connections might be ever so respectable, yet if her fortune was not adequate to our father's expectations, he would never consent to their union.

" Beauty she possessed in an eminent degree, and seemingly, a disposition which might captivate any man, much more one of my brother's temper and turn of mind ; yet still a lady so completely formed by nature to charm might be already engaged.

" Thus I reasoned during the best part of the night. The next morning, my brother told me he was going to visit Mrs. Maitland, and asked me to accompany him. To this I readily assented ; and on sending up our names, we were immediately admitted.

" We found the old lady netting, and her fair daughter at her tambour. They both rose at our entrance, and after desiring us to be seated, Mrs. Maitland began to pour forth her acknowledgments to my brother, for the timely and providential assistance he had given to her daughter, whilst the lovely Clara, with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes, sat trembling and silent.

" I had now more time to observe her ; and being fond of drawing the portraits of beautiful women will attempt to give you her's.

" Her face was oval ; her complexion delicately fair ; her forehead rather low, with dark blue eyes ; her nose rather inclined to the Roman ; her mouth (which inclosed two pearly rows of small white teeth) when she smiled, discovered a thousand nameless artless graces round it ; her flaxen hair without powder, and in short her whole figure (for she was above the middle size) conspired to excite the approbation as well as admiration of all who saw her.

" After sitting near an hour, during which the cause of the dreadful accident of the preceding evening was amply discussed, and repeated thanks were offered both by the amiable Clara and her mother to my brother and myself for our very humane and generous assistance, we took our leave.

" After this visit, however, my brother scarcely suffered a day to pass without visiting his charming Clara.

" I tendered my advice, which was now for the first time rejected. Frederick told me he found it impossible to live without her, and that he thought when his father knew his Clara's merits, they would balance her want of fortune.

" Three months had elapsed in this manner, when my father, who had hired a furnished house during the winter, as well for the sake of gratifying my mother with her son's company and the amusements of the Town, as for the purpose of attending the progress of a law-suit in which he was engaged, paid my brother an unexpected visit one morning at his chamber; and after some previous common-place conversation, acquainted him, that he had received proposals for an alliance between him and the only daughter and heiress of Sir John Astley; at the same time hinting, that as such a match would prove highly agreeable to him, he hoped that Frederick would have no objection to accompany him the next day to dine with the Baronet. Poor Frederick was thunder-struck at this intelligence; which my father perceiving, desired an explanation.

" My brother, instantly mustering up all his resolution, threw himself at my father's feet, and told him the story of his first meeting with, and preservation of, Miss Maitland. He concluded with assuring him, that he was too much in love with her to think of any other woman; and that he was persuaded, if his father was acquainted with her many amiable qualities, he would not refuse to consent to their union.

" Here,

"Here, however, he found himself mistaken; for my father flew into a violent rage, and vowed never to see him more, if he persevered in visiting *her*, or any of her family; adding, I shall now leave you till to-morrow morning, when remember, I desire, nay command you to accompany me to Sir John Astley's."

"As soon as my father had quitted my brother's chambers, Frederick called upon me, and, after relating the scene which had recently passed, requested my advice; when I recommended a compliance with his father's commands; at which he was much displeased, and asked me if I wished to see him miserable.

"The next morning a servant brought my brother a card from my father, intimating, that he expected to see him at noon. We were sitting together when it was delivered: he intreated me to go and plead for him. I complied with his request, but in vain: my father sternly forbade me to mention the name of Miss Maitland, or even that of my brother, till he returned to a proper sense of his duty.

"Poor Frederick, almost distracted at this intelligence, next applied through me to my mother; who told me, that though she sincerely pitied him, she was unable to assist him, well knowing that my father's resolution was not to be shaken.

"The day after I had communicated my mother's message, my brother left his chambers, and was neither seen or heard of either by myself or any of his friends for the space of a week; at the expiration of which, as my father, mother, and myself were sitting one evening alone in the drawing room, he entered with Miss Maitland (then Mrs. Mordaunt) in his hand, and throwing himself at their feet, implored their forgiveness, and blessing upon himself and his wife.

"As soon as my father had somewhat recovered from the surprize into which my brother's abrupt appearance and behaviour had at first thrown him, he arose, and in a passionate tone forbade Frederick ever to see him

more ; adding (turning to his son), " As you have thought proper, Sir, to marry without my consent and advice, as well as contrary to my express commands, take notice, that from this moment I shall cease to acknowledge you as my son." After saying this he quitted the room, at the same time leaving his injunctions on my mother immediately to follow him ; which with streaming eyes she reluctantly complied with.

" For my part, I administered every comfort which reason could suggest, or imagination furnish, to alleviate the anxiety and distress of the afflicted pair ; at the same time that I could not but censure their rash and precipitate conduct. I assured them of every assistance in my power to effect a reconciliation with my father. Unfortunately, however, I found all my efforts to this purpose were so far from producing the wished-for success, that at last he charged me, on pain of incurring his displeasure, never to mention their names to him any more.

" As my brother was totally dependent upon my father, and as his wife's fortune, which he had settled upon her, was very little more than fifteen hundred pounds, Frederick found no small difficulty in supporting the expences he had brought upon himself by assuming the character of a husband. Add to this, my income was too small to permit me to afford him any pecuniary help worthy of my affection, or of his acceptance ; and though my mother distressed herself to assist him, yet all was too little to maintain himself and his wife in the style of life in which they had been accustomed to live.

" Month after month, however, slid away, and yet we experienced no abatement of my father's resentment ; for whenever I attempted to solicit his forgiveness of their imprudence, he as instantly ordered me to leave his presence.

" About twelve months after my brother's marriage, his beloved Clara presented him with a son. I immediately

dately acquainted my father with the circumstances, in hopes the little *innocent* might prove the happy instrument of mollifying his resentment: the only answer, however, which I received was, “ ‘Tis very well! “ May be prove more dutiful to *bis* father, than my “ son has proved to me!” and notwithstanding my mother afterwards joined in my solicitations, he remained deaf and inexorable to all our intreaties.

“ Three years had elapsed in this manner, and the little *Frederick* (for so my brother’s child had been named after his father) had begun to prattle, and who often as he sat on my knee, with a pretty lisp would call me his dear, dear uncle; when one fatal day the dear little cherub not being very well, the nursery-maid took him into the fields for the benefit of the air; and having placed the child upon the grass, while she left him for a few minutes only, as she said, to gather some flowers to amuse him, he was unfortunately stolen away, and never afterwards heard of, notwithstanding all possible means were used, by advertisements and otherwise to recover him.

“ Three months after this severe loss, (an additional stroke of ill fortune which my brother and sister could badly sustain) my poor sister was deprived by death of her mother; a loss which joined to that of her son, and the inflexible temper of my father, conspired to break her heart, as she died about a month afterwards.

“ The consequence of these accumulated miseries and distress was, that my brother was seized with a melancholy which nothing could remove. Even my father’s forgiveness, which he had before been so extremely anxious to obtain, when tendered to him now, was received by him with the most perfect indifference: he only shook his head, and said it came *too late*: and so it proved; for in less than another month he was buried in the same grave with his beloved Clara. The death of my brother was in three months followed by

that of my mother; and in less than six weeks afterwards I was deprived of my father by an apoplectic fit, which was more than probably occasioned by his extreme grief for the loss of my mother.

" Thus, in less than a twelvemonth I was bereft of every relation that was near and dear to me. A kind of disgust and indifference to the world and every thing about me now took possession of, and at last produced such an absence of mind in, me, that I have frequently entered and quitted a room full of company without opening my lips, or scarcely knowing where I have been: and hence it has been that I have acquired the title of *The Silent Man*.

" A few years after this, my physicians, as well as friends, recommended to me to make the tour of Europe. I complied with their advice, and in my travels became acquainted with your worthy uncle Lord George Molton. A similarity of disposition first made me court his friendship; and by means of his agreeable correspondence and conversation, joined to my subsequent connections with this amiable family, "not for getting my little Julia," I have in a great measure recovered my former serenity of mind.

" I sometimes cherish a hope, from an inward presentiment which I feel, that I may one day discover my nephew. 'Tis now near eight-and-twenty years since he was stolen away; but the woman by whose carelessness the accident happened, and who is still living, assures me, that she should know him by a peculiar mark or scar on his neck, which he received by falling on the bar of a Bath-stove about a month before he was lost. This circumstance, however, can prove of very little service, as I may see him again and again, and not discover such a mark, unless by some accident bordering on the miraculous.

" Before I conclude this short memoir of my life, I think it necessary to apologize for my abrupt behaviour to Lady Jemima, on my first speaking to her, as it must

must have certainly appeared equally rude and impertinent; but being desirous of drawing her into conversation, and having so long accustomed myself to preserve a total silence in public company, I felt myself at a loss for a subject to introduce me to her notice; and must therefore throw myself entirely on her Ladyship's well-known candour and good-nature for my forgiveness."

Thus ends Mr. Mordaunt, as must likewise your Jemima, who is too tired to make any comments on his story, or trouble you with any other additions to it, than to bid you adieu.

J. GUZMAN.

L E T T E R X C.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Rosehill Farm.

MY last epistle * was written in such a hurry, that I much fear you found some difficulty in deciphering it. The purport of it was to inform you, that having received advice of the death of my worthy uncle, I immediately set off for this place, though, I am very sorry to add, much against the inclination of my wife. My father, mother, sister, and aunt received us with open arms, tho' in tears; and scarcely, indeed, could I restrain from mingling my own with theirs; for I have not yet recovered my former spirits.

On opening my uncle's will, I found myself master of this house, with all the estate belonging to it. I need not tell you, I believe, that it is a delightful place.

Sir James and Lady Belville leave us soon; but Lady Clara has entreated my sister to stay with her; as she says she shall grow stupid and melancholy to

L 4

live

* This Letter does not appear.

live here without company. As to my aunt, it is fixed that she is to continue with my father and mother as long as she pleases.

In this manner are things settled at present; how long they will remain so, Heaven only knows!

Lady Laura Beaumont appears to be quite enchanted with this spot. Indeed, were it not for her kind attentions, I should too often find myself alone; as my wife never seems desirous of, or happy in, my company; and when she cannot persuade my sister to join her in a walking, fishing, or riding party, will absent herself whole mornings with only her servant.

My father and mother have expressed great surprise as well as concern at her conduct; while I say every thing I can to make them think better of her than I fear she deserves.

Heigh-ho! Edward! if these are the comforts of matrimony, I will never advise young men to marry. But all women are not alike.—I wish my friend, you could obtain leave of absence for a month or two; your company might help to enliven the scene a little.

A report prevails, that my regiment will be ordered abroad before the winter sets-in.—Well, with all my heart; for then my Lady will stand the better chance of getting rid of me soon.

Adieu, Edward, and believe me ever

Yours,

H. BELLVILLE.

LETTER XCI.

Lady Laura Beaumont to Miss Glenville.

My dear Susan,

Rose-bill Farm.

SIR James and Lady Bellville, with Miss Margaret, left us yesterday: Miss Bellville still remains here. Lady Clara is quite melancholy and low-spirited, and vows if some company do not drop in upon us soon, she

she will run away and leave us sober folks to ourselves. The Colonel laughs at and tells her, she will find few places livelier at present: "Besides," (added he this morning at breakfast, when she was complaining of the loneliness of the place) "I should imagine, "my dear you were fond of retirement, as you fly "the company both of Lady Laura and myself." She made no reply, but soon afterwards quitted the room, as did also Miss Belville.

"I am amazed, Sir, that Lady Clara don't form some acquaintance with the families around her."

"Very true, Lady Laura; but she tells me there is not a female among them whom a woman of fashion can converse with. If she continues to appear thus miserable, I must take her to some of the watering-places, as I cannot bear to see her unhappy."

"Lord bless me, Sir, surely you will not!"

"Why, what would you advise me to do, Lady Laura?"

"By no means, Sir, to carry her to any public place, lest Bromley should chance to hear of it, and follow her."

He coloured, bit his lips, and replied, "I know no reason, Madam, why I should even suspect Lady Clara's honour; neither indeed can I believe that she ever has allowed, or would permit Colonel Bromley or any other person to assume any improper freedoms." Having said this, he left the room.

I was afraid that I had gone too far, and therefore longed for an opportunity to see him again. Fortunately, on going into the garden soon afterwards, I perceived him walking with folded arms. I instantly walked up to him, and desired to know if he was not well.

He started at my voice, and said, "I beg pardon, Madam, I did not see you;" and then walked on

for some time without speaking. I continued to stroll at a small distance without interrupting him, when at last, turning round and advancing to me, he very gravely addressed me thus : " By some hints, Madam, " which have fallen from you at various times, I " am inclined to think that you are possessed of the " knowledge of some particulars respecting my wife " and Colonel Bromley with which I ought to be " acquainted."—Here he stopped.

This home-question, Susan, startled me not a little ; and I was for some moments at a loss to answer him. At last I replied as follows : " I am not, Sir, " entrusted with her Ladyship's secrets ; neither do " I know any thing particular, except that I have " often heard my cousin say, that Colonel Bromley " was a great favourite of hers."

" She might say so very innocently, Lady Laura ; " but I cannot think such an expression justifies the " least suspicion of an improper connection between " them."

This speech nettling me, I answered, " I am " sorry, Sir, if my desire to serve Lady Clara or " yourself should be mistaken or misinterpreted."

Taking my hand, he replied, " I beg pardon, " Madam, if I have offended ; but I cannot persuade " myself to think my wife's conduct in the least cri- " minal : on the contrary, I am inclined to believe " that most of the follies she commits are to be im- " puted to her extreme vivacity."

My anger now instantly subsided, and his soliciting my pardon prompted me to make the following speech, which I much fear has entirely ruined me in his opinion :

" I am sensible, Sir, that her Ladyship's disposition " was always gay and lively ; and I must own that " I have not been a little surprised at your marrying " her, since I have had the opportunity of knowing " your temper and turn of mind. I wish (continued
" I, with

" I, with a sigh) to see you happy ; and for this reason only have cautioned you against Bromley. Perhaps, if I had followed the dictates of my own heart, I should have left Lady Clara to her fate, as, ever since I first saw you, I have had occasion for my utmost resolution to"—

Here I stopped, and on lifting up my eyes, after some moments pause, perceived—or thought I perceived—a kind of mingled surprize and contempt struggling in his countenance ; but without making me the least reply, he immediately turned down another walk to avoid me ; and I have not had courage to see him since.

From this you will perceive, my dear Susan, that I was mistaken in my man ; for I foolishly thought him too gallant to refuse the proffered love of any lady. Besides, as it is not at all improbable that he will very soon have occasion to sue for a divorce, I was in hopes of succeeding my cousin ; not perhaps that I should have been less fickle than Lady Clara, though I would most certainly have endeavoured to have been more careful of my reputation.

Thus all my wise schemes are frustrated, and I have been plotting to no purpose.—But the dinner-bell rings, so that I must for the present bid you adieu.

Six in the Evening.

HEAVENS, Susan, what an insult ! Read the enclosed, which I just now found on my dressing-table, and tell me if it is not sufficient to provoke any woman's resentment. Yes, it is ; and I hope I shall soon be able to retaliate. Farewel.

Yours,

LAURA BEAUMONT.

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To Lady Laura Beaumont.

(Enclosed in the preceding Letter.)

" Madam,

" AFTER the very extraordinary (I will hope inadvertent) declaration which escaped you this morning in the garden, I cannot resist the inclination I feel of troubling your Ladyship with a few friendly lines of advice.

" You are young, my dear Lady Laura, and did not, I am inclined to believe, consider the impropriety you were guilty of in confessing your love for a man who could not without perjury return it. Though Lady Clara's conduct be ever so blameable, I will never give her cause to complain of mine. Besides, I flatter myself that Lady Clara has too much good sense not to perceive and correct any levities in her conduct which might lead Colonel Bromley or any other man to the assumption of liberties, which would prove as destructive of her happiness as injurious to my honour. For my own part, as I never could persuade myself to act so base a part as to encourage an affection in any woman which I could not return; so I would most earnestly recommend to any lady who might have been so unfortunate as to place her affections upon an improper object, not only to conceal them from him with the most scrupulous care, but to fly from and avoid his company, as she would the plague or an infection.

" That your Ladyship will excuse this frankness, and not construe it into impertinence, is the ardent wish of

" Your Ladyship's
" Most respectful humble servant,
" H. BELVILLE."

LETTER

LETTER XCII.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Dear Ned,

I AM sat down in order to give you a conversation which passed this morning between Lady Laura Beaumont and myself, and which I shall proceed to lay before you without further preface*.

I leave you to guess how much this very extraordinary confession astonished me ! Indeed, I was equally surprised and shocked to see a woman so young and so lovely forget her sex's dignity as well as delicacy so far, as boldly to avow her love for a man already married.

I turned away, in order to give her time to recover her confusion, during which I deliberated on the line of conduct I ought to assume on such a singular occasion; and at length determined to let her know by a letter how much I disapproved of her behaviour. I accordingly wrote the enclosed ; but thinking it rather too severe on reading it a second time, I resolved to wait till dinner, when I should be better able to judge, whether her strange conduct in the morning was accidental or premeditated. When the dinner-bell rung, she came down as usual, and appeared just as gay and lively as formerly. This levity of behaviour determined me ; and as soon as the cloth was removed, after making an excuse to leave the room, I laid the letter on her dressing-table, and then returned back to the company in the dining-parlour.

I am not certain, Edward, whether you will approve my conduct or not ; but I deemed myself in honour bound to my wife, Lady Laura, and even myself to act in the manner I have done.

That

* Here Colonel Belville relates what Lady Laura Beaumont had written to her friend in the preceding letter.

That Lady Clara is guilty of many imprudences, I am but too certain; yet to know that there is a woman under my roof who has not scrupled, in violation of every principle of female delicacy and reserve, as well as of honour and friendship, to own her partiality for me, tho' married to her own cousin, and encourage her to continue under it, were baseness in the highest extreme; especially as I must now be assured, that every little fault of my wife's would be exaggerated.

I saw no more of Lady Laura till the next morning at breakfast, when, after taking her seat, and paying the usual compliments of the morning, she turned to my wife, and said in a tremulous voice, "I am going to leave you, Lady Clara."

"What, so suddenly?" returned my wife, indifferently. "Pray when do you go?"

"This morning."

"Lord bless me! what's the meaning of this hasty resolution?"

"'Tis hasty, to be sure; but the place, as your Ladyship says, is so dull, there is no enduring it."

This speech made my wife and sister stare, as she had always before talked in a very different stile.

"Dear Lady Laura (replied my sister), I always thought that you preferred solitude to bustle and noise."

"Then, Madam, you have mistaken my temper, as perhaps other people have done also."

She laid a particular emphasis on "other people," and I thought looked particularly at me.

"Indeed (said Lady Clara), I thought you very much altered; as when we were children, you of the two was always reckoned the liveliest."

Breakfast being ended, my wife and sister left the room, and I was preparing to follow, when Lady Laura addressed me with, "Give me leave to speak to you, Sir."

I immediately stopped, and resumed my seat.

"I am

" I am sorry to find, Sir, that my very foolish behaviour yesterday has entirely lost me the place I once flattered myself I possessed in your esteem ; but, " Sir," continued she, with eyes flashing resentment and indignation, " don't be so vain as to imagine that I cannot conquer whatever foolish prejudices or prepossessions I may have entertained in your favour. You may judge of my resolution, from my immediate compliance with your advice, in thus abruptly quitting your house."

Here she stopped, while I was so astonished at this address, which was delivered in a very violent tone, and by a lady too whom I had hitherto conceived to be all softness and gentleness, that I was quite at a loss to frame a reply : at length I said, " I am extremely concerned, Lady Laura, to see you discompose those features, which till this moment I thought beamed nothing but sweetness. Let me again, Madam, presume to repeat my advice ; which is, to compose yourself, and fly from a house, which together with its owner must now be hateful to you."

I then bowed, quitted the room, and went into the garden, where I joined my wife and sister : we had not however long walked together before we saw Lady Laura advancing towards us.

" I am come to wish you a good morning, cousin, as I am going to set off immediately."

Lady Clara said something which I did not distinctly hear, intimating that she was sorry to part with her ; after which we followed her to the gate, when I offered my hand to help her into her carriage, and of which she readily accepted : then bowing to us all in general, she ordered the servant to drive off.

Neither Lady Clara nor my sister made any comments to me or to each other on Lady Laura's sudden departure : but I think my wife has been in a much better temper since she has been gone. Surely she could

HISTORY OF

could not have been offended or alarmed at the attentions which were shewn me by Lady Laura ; if she had, I should have supposed she would not have left us alone so often ; but I am glad Lady Laura is gone, and will say no more about her.

I am obliged to you for your kind enquiries after my health, which I have the pleasure to tell you is much mended. I hope you will perform your promise of being with us soon, till when

Adieu, my dear friend ! Yours,
HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER XCIII.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

Molton Park.

I Received your letter, my dear, last week, and should have answered it sooner, was not the house so full of company, that I have scarcely time for any thing but bustle. We have at present with us Lady Susan Pelham, and Miss Manners ; both of whom you have heard me mention before ; Sir William Meredith, Mr. Darcy, Colonel Molesworth, Captain Greville, and Lord Palmerston, whom I have before mentioned to you under the title of Sir Edward. but who has been lately created a peer. He is a very agreeable man, and a great favourite of mine.

In answer to your request, that I would give you some account of the neighbourhood, it is very genteel, and very sociable. The Earl of Mandeville's family reside here, as do several other persons of fashion, whom I have known in town. Lady Lucy Mandeville, his daughter, is frequently at the Park, and is really a very agreeable woman.

We expect to see Lord Merton and his sister Lady Horatia to-morrow. I have heard much of this young lady from Lady Clara Belville, but have never seen her. Her brother Lord Merton, I recollect to have seen

seen once, yet scarcely remember what sort of a man he is: but I will tell you more of them when they arrive.

I wonder if Colonel Belville continues to mend, and if the family are still at Bristol.

You cannot think, my Julia, how contemptible I appear to myself, when I examine my heart. Why cannot I conquer my love for a man who never can be mine, and who never perhaps thought seriously of me? 'Tis true, from what he writes in his letter to his friend, he would appear to have once entertained some favourable sentiments of me; but does he not add, that he will try to conquer a passion which will only be productive of unhappiness to him. He certainly has conquered it; wherefore then Jemima, do you thus debase yourself, by thinking so much of one who could so soon forget you?—Fye, Jemima, fye!

I was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Susan Pelham, who came to ask me to take a walk with her; but as I was in no spirits to listen to small-talk, I begged to be excused, alledging that I had several letters to write. My apology was admitted, and she is gone; but as I think this epistle is already of a sufficient length, I shall instantly conclude it with adding, that I am ever

My dear Julia's affectionate,
JEMIMA GUZMAN.

LETTER XCIV.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

My dear Friend,

I Received yours with its contents yesterday; but how can I sufficiently praise a conduct so just, and truly honourable! Noble, generous Belville, why art thou not happy? Ill-fated wretch that I was, ever to presume to advise one so far my superior in judgment, resolution, and understanding! I never can pardon myself

self for my presumption, nor be truly happy till you are so.

I propose to see you soon; but whatever you do, my friend, take care of your health. Do not let melancholy prey on your spirits, which I still hope will in a short time resume their wonted tone of mirth, cheerfulness, and good humour.

Adieu! let me have one more letter before I leave this place.

Yours sincerely,
EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER XCV.

Colonel Bromley to Sir Richard Randall.

London.

HERE am I, Randall; but how I came here, or what I came about, I scarcely know. The last time I saw you was at Bristol, where you may probably recollect I informed you that I was over-head and-ears in love—but that the mischief of it was, the lady was married. Perhaps this circumstance may prove the better for me; but—curse on my unlucky stars!—just as I was in hopes of prevailing on my lady to elope, her husband set off with her the Devil knows whither. This horridly provoked me, as I had not time even to learn the place they were going to. Patience, however, which is a cure for all things, and Fortune, which has hitherto stood my friend, will not now, I hope, forsake me; but by some kind chance or other throw her again in my way.

Such, Randall, being the state of my affairs, I believe I shall fill up my time at present in paying a visit to my uncle and brother in the North; especially as it is absolutely necessary for me to make my peace with the old Don, lest he should tip off on a sudden, while he is angry with me, and leave me nothing; and which

which would be a horrible pull back, as I can only just rub on by help of my pay from quarter to quarter.

Methinks this has been a very sober letter; I will therefore put an end to it, for fear I should dose while I am writing, and you in reading it.

Let your next be directed to me in the North.

Yours,

ADOLPHUS BROMLEY.

L E T T E R X C V I .

Lady Clara Belville to Lady Jemima Guzman.

Dear Jemima,

I HAVE patiently waited for some time past in daily expectation of receiving a letter from your Ladyship, but have always found myself disappointed: being now, however, quite out of all patience, I am determined to write, if it is only to compel you to send me an answer in return.

I at first thought that you might perhaps be unacquainted with our address: but on asking Miss Belville, if she had not written to the Marchioness since she had arrived here, she informed me that she had corresponded with her last week: it follows, of course, that if you did not know it before, you might have then heard where we are to be heard of, or met with at present, and consequently you can have no excuse for your silence since that time. Let me therefore hear from you by the return of the post, and I will sign and seal your pardon on the back of your letter.

We are very dull and stupid here, not being able at present to receive any company; neither, indeed, do I see how we can till the house is new-furnished, as the present beds, tables, chairs, glasses, &c. are so very old-fashioned and antiquated, that I should be afraid of their frightening all my acquaintance of the Ton away.

Do

Do you know, that I have had some thoughts, notwithstanding your unkind behaviour, of paying you a visit, if I thought such a liberty would not be deemed impertinent? But as I am not conscious of having offended either yourself or any part of your family, if not inconvenient nor disagreeable, we will pass a week with you, as I think a little variety would prove of service both to Belville and me.

Adieu, my dear Lady Jemima, and pray send me a long letter to atone for your past neglect.

I remain yours,

CLARA BELVILLE.

LETTER XCVII.

Miss Thornton to Lady Jemima Guzman.

I Received my dear Lady Jemima's letter yesterday, but cannot tell her how much its contents distressed me.—Why, why will my much-beloved friend thus torment herself?—Why will she not summon to her aid that fortitude of mind which has sustained her in trials much more severe and painful than that under which she is now suffering?—Why thus submissive bow to that tyrant Love, when she may dictate to so many of his slaves?

If I could entertain the most distant hope of Belville being ever yours, I would not press this advice upon you: but as there appears to be little if any prospect of such an event taking place, you ought—yes, my friend, I again repeat, you ought—to exert every effort to conquer a passion which (to use Belville's words) “can only be productive of unhappiness to you”—Fye, my dear Jemima, fye! Remember, he could, and has conquered *his* passion for you, though my Jemima finds it impossible to subdue *her's* for him.

I hope my amiable friend will not think I treat her too harshly, but do me the justice to believe (if I may, and

and I hope I may, use such an allusion without the imputation of profanity or impurity) that I “ chasten those ‘only whom I love.’”—But enough on a subject which can only prove painful to you.

Sir Thomas Glendore has a whole regiment of visitors; and amongst the rest, what do you think of Sir Cecil Mowbray?—I have no doubt but you will be surprised at this piece of intelligence; yet it is even so.—By the bye, I think the Baronet much more agreeable than when I first saw him; though perhaps this sudden partiality may arise from your being continually the theme of his conversation; for chancing one day to speak to my father of Lady Jemima Guzman, he started, and enquired if I knew the lady; and ran on in your praise I verily believe nearly half an hour. I am *sartain, sartain* sure, (as my Somersetshire Nelly used to say) that he *does* love you; and “in good ‘faith and troth,” (to continue Nelly’s dialect) I likewise *does tbind* as how your Ladyship might be happy with him, if you would vouchsafe to have him.

As to what I might have formerly said respecting Sir Cecil, I beg your Ladyship to consider the whole merely as a joke, which for the moment playing upon and diverting the fancy, was therefore by way of amusement communicated to your Ladyship by the pen of

Your Ladyship’s affectionate
JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER XCVIII.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Miss Thornton.

My dear Julia,

I CAN easily forgive the first part of your last letter, as I am sure it proceeded solely from a fervent zeal for my happiness and welfare: too well do I know the justness of your advice; and would to Heaven I could pursue it!

The

The latter part of your letter, however, I can scarcely forgive. How long has such heroism possessed the breast of my friend? I do most solemnly assure you, that were I to marry to-morrow, Sir Cecil Mowbray would not be found to be the man of my choice. As to his talking of me, it most probably proceeds merely from his want of a better subject, as he must be certain that I have never given him any the least encouragement.

My sister received a letter a few days ago from Miss Belville, who tells her, "that she is with her brother and sister at Rose-Hill Farm; and that he is very much mended, though far from having recovered his wonted cheerfulness."

Lord Merton with his sister arrived here yesterday; and as they promise to be great favourites of mine, I will endeavour to give you an outline of their portraits.

Lady Horatia is about eighteen, remarkably tall of her age, with a clear brown complexion and black eyes, and a small mouth with exceeding good teeth: she is perfectly elegant in her manners, and appears to possess an affable lively disposition, unmixed with that conceit or impertinence which are too often the appendages of a woman of fashion.

Her brother is likewise tall; and about one or two-and twenty; has very good eyes and teeth, though he is not handsome, owing to the small-pox, with which he is rather unfavourably pitted. His temper seems to accord with that of his sister: he is polite and attentive to ours, yet at the same time frank, social, and friendly with his own sex.

A letter is just brought me.—Is it from my Julia?—No.—By the superscription, it would appear to come from Lady Clara Belville.—I must lay down my pen and peruse it: I know you will excuse me.—Adieu till then.

Ah Julia! Julia! what will become of me?—Oh Lady Clara! little do you think of what imprudence you

you are guilty.—I inclose you a copy of her letter.—I sent for the Marchioness immediately, and shewed it to her, who was equally concerned with myself at the contents, as it is impossible, without entirely breaking with her, to decline the visit.—I now, indeed, shall have occasion for the exertion of all my fortitude—My sister afterwards consulted my uncle and brother, who both coincide in her opinion, that we ought not by any means to evade her self-invitation.

Thus am I at last compelled to reside under the same roof with the man, whom, of all others, partial as I am to him, I would wish not to see, much less to live with.—But I will endeavour to think with my favourite Pope, that, “whatever is, is right.”—And Heaven grant that I may surmount this *trial!* after which, I am resolved to follow my friend’s advice, and take some honest, simple, well-meaning man, “for ‘better or for worse, until death us do part;” though I do assure my Julia, that Sir Cecil Mowbray will not, shall not be the happy *He*.—I propose in consequence to take up, and to lead a new life; to be as gay, careless, thoughtless, and dissipated as the most affected fashionable leader of the female Ton.

I forget, however, that I am to write to Lady Clara;—a painful task! as I must counterfeit a seeming which is foreign to my heart.—I must therefore, from want of time to say more, conclude with the trite but honest assurance of being ever

Yours,

JEMIMA GUZMAN.

LETTER XCIX.

Lady Jemima Guzman to Lady Clara Belville.

Molton Park.

A N hour has scarcely elapsed since I received your Ladyship’s epistle; I trust, therefore, that the expedition with which I have dispatched this answer, will

will ensure me that pardon and forgiveness which you so generously promise me on its receipt.

I must intreat your Ladyship, however, not to impute my silence either to neglect or indifference, as it was occasioned solely by my ignorance of your address, till Miss Belville's letter for the Marchioness arrived; and, unfortunately, since that time I have been so much engaged by company, that I have found it totally impossible to think of, much less to write to, any of my friends who were not immediately near or about me.

But here comes my sister, to whom, as mistress of the house, I shall cheerfully, as it is my bounden duty, resign my pen.—“Here it is, my Lady.”—

“Colonel and Lady Clara, with Miss Belville,
“will, I hope, pardon a neglect which has proceeded
“more from accident than intention. Lord George
“Molton, the Marquis, and myself, expect their ar-
“rival at the Park with impatience. As to Lady Je-
“mima, I shall leave her to speak for herself.”

“Adieu, my dear Lady Clara, and remember, that
“I cannot too soon have the pleasure of assuring you
“personally how much I am yours,

“C. GUZMAN.”

So! the Marchioness has excused all the family but me, and I am left to frame an excuse for myself.—Well, good folks, I beg your pardon, and *all that*; but I am too vain to suppose my forgiveness will be long wanting.

We have at present a great deal of company with us. Lord Merton, his sister, with Lady Susan Pelham, Miss Manners, and knights, baron-knights, captains, colonels, 'quires, &c. &c. out of number.—“Coming, good folks! coming!”—They drag me from my pen, and absolutely force me to say,

Adieu—Adieu,

My dear Lady Clara!

J. GUZMAN.
LETTER

LETTER C.

Sir Cecil Mowbray to Sir George Maynard.

HERE I am, George, at Glendower's! I have run away from one Deity only to fall in the way of another, who is no less than Miss Thornton, of whom I believe you have heard me before make honourable mention.

I saw her at this very place about two years ago, and then thought her very agreeable; but the sight of Lady Jemima and many other pretty creatures (though not to be put in competition with the last-mentioned angel), have since put her out of my head.

But I am quite tired of leading a single life; and if on a more intimate acquaintance I should continue to like Miss Thornton as well as I do at present, I verily believe I shall at last enter the matrimonial noose. What makes me admire her the more is, that I find she is one of the most intimate friends of Lady Jemima Guzman; she must therefore approach something towards female perfection, or she could not have been noticed by that angelic creature.

Let me consider!—Now I think of it, I remember to have heard her Ladyship last winter speak of a Miss Thornton.—How the deuce came I to be so stupid!—Nay, more than that, I recollect, too, that she spoke very highly in her praise.—Well, I am going to her father's; so adieu—till my return.

Eight o'Clock.

I HAVE told you in the former part of this sheet, that I was going to Mr. Thornton's. Upon announcing myself at the old gentleman's door, I was informed by the servants (who make no stranger of me) that Miss Thornton was in the garden. I immediately went in pursuit of her, and on entering it, spied her in

a little summer-house holding a handkerchief to her eyes. As she was sitting with her back towards me, she could neither perceive nor hear me till I had advanced so near her as to observe a paper in her hand; when on turning round, and seeing me, she exclaimed,

"Heavens, Sir Cecil!"

"Pardon this intrusion, Madam (taking her hand);
"but for Heaven's sake what can be the occasion of
"those lovely eyes being suffused in tears?"

"The occasion of them, Sir (replied the lovely
"mourner), arises from this paper, which informs me
"of the distress of a friend."

"Can I in any way prove the happy instrument of
"alleviating or removing that friend's distress? Speak!
"My life, my fortune shall be devoted to procure the
"happiness of Miss Thornton."

"I am much obliged to you, Sir (replied the lovely
"Julia, smiling through her tears); but neither are
"requisite."

"May I presume to ask, is it a lady or a gentleman
"who occasions you this uneasiness?"

"It is a lady, I do assure you, Sir Cecil."

"Would to Heaven I could serve her!"

"You are very kind, Sir Cecil; but it is not in
"any one's power to serve her in the mode you pro-
"bably allude to, as she wants nothing but advice."

"O! advice!—(exclaimed I, laughing, for I
"wanted to hear who she was) you don't know what
"a notable adviser I am. Tell me her name and her
"case, and I will set off immediately to give her
"my opinion."

"Pardon me, Sir, I always keep such secrets as
"my friends are pleased to honour me with, inviola-
"bly sacred. If you please, we will go in search of
"my father."

I accordingly accompanied the little bewitching gyp-
sey in search of her father, as I found she would not
intrust me with the name of her friend, though I en-
tertained

Lady JEMIMA GUZMAN. 267

ertained a very strong suspicion that this friend was no other than Lady Jemima Guzman. I therefore, as we walked, talked on different subjects; and at last carelessly enquired, " Pray, Madam, have you heard of or from Lady Jemima Guzman lately?"

She smiled; and answered, " Yes, Sir."

" I hope her Ladyship was well?"

" Very well, I thank you, Sir."

At this moment her father appeared, and put an end to our conversation.

Upon my honour, I do believe this distressed friend to be neither more nor less than Lady Jemima, though the cunning little baggage would not gratify my curiosity; but why or how Lady Jemima should be so distressed as to draw tears from Julia Thornton, I am totally at a loss to comprehend or explain.

I believe I shall take a trip to The Park, and once more *for the last time* throw myself at her Ladyship's feet; when if she still persists in refusing me, I will return hither and try what effects my eloquence and professions will produce on the penetrable stuff of Julia Thornton.

Such is the present plan of

Yours,
CECIL MOWBRAY.

LETTER CI.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

THOUGH my heart, mind, may I add soul, are almost wholly engrossed by one object, yet I cannot forbear first taking notice of the last letter I received from my dear friend.

Why do you upbraid yourself, my dear Hillgrove? You acted the part of a sincere friend; I only was to blame. Nay, suppose I had not married Lady Clara,

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might

might I not have been equally unhappy with some other flirting, flaunting demirep of quality?

As to Miss Meadows—as she was then stiled—I could not at that time, for reasons which I have explained to you before, think of offering myself to her; and after I became acquainted with her real situation, in life, I certainly never should have owned my passion for her, unless she had given me cause to think that I was not indifferent to her.—If, indeed, before I had married Lady Clara, I had heard what she frankly, generously confessed in our last conversation—But, avaunt, reflection! No more of that. Let me, however, my dear friend, never more hear you upbraid yourself in such terms as you did in your last.

I will now proceed to give you the origin of the first two or three lines of this epistle, the singularity of which has most probably excited your curiosity.

Yesterday morning at breakfast Lady Clara turning to my sister said, “ Pray, Matilda, have you had any answer from the Marchioness de Guzman yet ? ”

“ No, sister, I have not.”

“ That’s rather strange, isn’t it ? I wrote yesterday to Lady Jemima to know the reason of *her* silence ; and at the same time told her, that if it was neither inconvenient nor disagreeable, we proposed to make them a visit — You have no objection, I dare say, ‘ Colonel ? ’ Good Heavens, Hillgrove ! I was petrified at this unexpected declaration : even my sister turned pale (though I can’t conjecture why or wherefore) ; but at last, to my great relief, she said, “ Dear Lady Clara, surely you are not in earnest ? ”

“ Indeed but I am ; and why not, pray ? ”

“ Because I should have imagined you were too much offended by their supposed neglect, to invite yourself unasked.”

“ Olud !

" Olud ! I dare say Jemima will give me a sufficient reason for her neglect ; don't you think so, Belville ?"

" Thus called upon, I was forced to answer, " I make no doubt of it, my dear : but I must confess, the circumstance happens rather *mal-à-propos* at present, as I expect Captain Hillgrove every day."

" Aye ! Well, that will make no difference, as I dare say he will be very welcome ; for you know he is a great favourite with Lady Jemima."

Here ended our conversation upon this subject for that time : a day or two after, however, while we sat at dinner, letters came to my wife and sister. As soon as Lady Clara had read her's, she exclaimed, " Did I not tell you that Jemima would give a sufficient reason for her supposed neglect ?—Here's a letter from her, Colonel : Pray read it."

I inclose a copy for you, and you will perceive from it that we *must* go.—Her Ladyship writes in a very gay, lively style, and seems in great spirits.—As to Lady Clara, she is become quite another woman, and her eyes sparkled with new fire at the thoughts of her intended visit. I strive to appear equally pleased and satisfied, tho' my looks give the lie to my heart ; but I am determined, let it cost me ever so dear, to keep up my spirits while at The Park.

I hope to receive one more letter from you, to inform me what you propose doing. I have told you what Clara says about your being a great favourite with Lady Jemima ; though I will not absolutely vouch for the authenticity of her assertion. Farewell !

Yours, &c.

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER CII.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

My dear Lucy,

Rose-Hill Farm.

I SHOULD not have written again to you so soon, were it not to inform you that we are going to pay a visit at Molton Park. I regret the journey on my brother's, though I am pleased with it on my own account, having heard much of the natural beauties, as well as the ornamental improvements, of its delightful situation.

The proposal originated with Lady Clara; and I thought my brother appeared to be much confused when she first mentioned it. Be it as it will, however, we are to go.

I cannot help being very uneasy about Henry, his looks are so altered from what they used to be. He visibly falls away every day, and scarcely eats any thing: in short, I am sure some secret uneasiness preys upon his mind. I am extremely concerned to add, that Lady Clara seems quite indifferent about him; for on my observing yesterday to her how thin my brother was grown, she only answered carelessly, "Lord! 'is he?"

"Why, don't you think so?"

"Upon my word, I have scarcely looked at him these two days."

"No!—Is it possible?—You amaze me!"

"Why, Lord, child, what would you have me to do? One can't always be looking at one's husband. If he is ill, why doesn't he have advice?"

I am really both surprised and shocked at her conduct. Yesterday she only complained of the headache, when if you had seen with what solicitude my brother hung over her, you would have been amazed at her Ladyship's nonchalance, as she received all his little tendernesses and affections with as much coldness

as if they had been forced upon her by an entire stranger.

I am very certain that nothing in his behaviour can have given her cause for such gross neglect, such shameful indifference; and if she had proved a kind and affectionate wife, he never could or would have given another woman a place in the smallest corner of his heart.

Adieu, my dear Lucy!

Yours affectionately,

MATILDA BELVILLE

LETTER CIII.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

My dear Friend,

I Received yours yesterday, and am heartily grieved that the folly of Lady Clara has forced you to live, tho' for a short time, under the same roof with Lady Jemima. At the same time I am pleased to find there is so much other company in the house, as this will not only perhaps preserve you from many embarrassing awkward situations, but may also, by varying the scene, contribute equally to your amusement and health. I cannot sufficiently commend your resolution of keeping up your spirits, and of appearing as cheerful as possible.

I now propose, instead of seeing you, to pay a visit to Burton, as I cannot think of going to The Park uninvited.

As to my being a *favourite* with Lady Jemima, I give the same credit to that assertion as I did to a former declaration of Lady Clara, when she said Lady Jemima *bated* you.

We have no news here. Have you any in your part of the world? I propose directing this to your own house, as I suppose you will not have left it before this can reach you.

You will probably say this is a very short epistle; but having no subject to write upon, you cannot expect it to be otherwise.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

